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**DEBORAH ROSS INTERVIEW ILIE NASTASE:** 'WOMEN SAY TO ME, OH BABY, YOU GOOD'



Shert breaks in Amsterden or Antwerp BRITISH AIRWAYS

NO TOKEN COLLECT

## Defiant activists to fight Blair on reforms

**Barrie Clement** 

Tony Blair is facing his first big challenge from his own party since he came to power. The Labour leader will clash with up to balf of the party's constituencies over the next phase of his modernisation project.

Party leaders are determined to press ahead with proposals designed to sideline Labour's left wing and to neuter internal strife, despite calls for them to be postponed. The decision will cause a row at this autumn's conference, marring planned victory celebrations.

Both local parties and trades unions will oppose moves to push the plans through this year, and will try to stall them until late 1998. Party officials be-

Labour's key plans

100

The National Executive Committee must not see itself as "watchdog", but will have a duty to back the Government. Conference will be a "showcase", although it will still have the final say on policy issues. Policy-making will be overseen by the political office at No 10. Labour will try to build a mass membership, with a target of 450,000 this year - up 50,000.

lieve that, if this succeeds, part of the two-year programme could be lost in the run-up to the next general election. After weeks of Conservative agonising over the effectiveness of Labour's modernising project, news of the divisions will be particularly irksome to the Government.

The dissent has arisen over the "Labour into Power" project, on which local parties and unions have until the end of next week to comment.

The project aims to prevent a recurrence of the rows which beset the Labour government in the 1970s. If it goes ahead, it will remove left-wingers from the National Executive Committee and place the onus on committee members to support the Government

Ministers will be put formally at the head of the policy-making process, through a new high-level Joint Policy Committee, chaired by Tony Blair and John Prescott. Conference rows will be averted by making the event mainly a "showcase" for policies, rather than a genuine debating chamber.

Key decisions will take place in re-

gional "policy forums" designed to at-

activists which dominated policy-making in the past. The party will also continue its push for new members - a move partly aimed at marginalising the stalwarts of the left.

"These measures are taking the 'One Member One Vote' reforms right to the heart of the party," one en-thusiast said last week, referring to changes brought in by John Smith to

modernise the selection of MPs.
Opponents of the measures argue, though, that the plans to muzzle the left will take power from the grassroots of the party, rather than increasing it.

Between a third and a half of constituencies are believed to feel they have not had enough time to co er the proposals. Although they were published in February, all normal party business was suspended that month in the run-up to the general election.

Among them is Brent East, con-

stituency of the left-wing MP Ken Livingstone, a long-time critic of the proposals. "My party were unani-mous in wanting this deferred, because they didn't think there was any possibility of any serious consideration in such a rushed manner after the election," he said.

The document is also encountering opposition from union affiliates, which presently hold half the votes at the annual conference. While unions are oublicly emphasising their support of the broad thrust of the document, they harbour a number of serious concerns.

The three biggest affiliates, the GMB, the TGWU and Unison, which together account for more than a third of the votes, are particularly angry about plans to deprive them of the ability to table motions at the annual conference, outside an agenda set by the Joint Policy Committee.

All three organisations will seek to put pressure on the Labour leadership to make concessions on the content of the document. There will also be calls for a substantial debate on the issue.

which Tony Blair may be keen to avoid. A GMB statement attacks the existing National Policy Forum for creating an atmosphere of "mistrust and suspicion" and argues that it is surrounded

by a "growing crisis of accountability".

Last night a Labour spokesman said he had not heard that there was widespread opposition, though he added that in some areas members were saying they wanted more time to discuss

"There is no question of putting this off until next year. When we have got the consultative process completed we are going to have to put together a doctract members outside the band of ument which unites the responses."





#### Hingis has all the trappings of a teenage champion

Martina Hingis, at 16 the youngest ever world No 1 tennis player - bere sporting a replica costume and racquet of the 1887 Wimbledon champion Lottie Dod in front of the new Nn 1 court at the All England Club - will attempt over the next fortnight to become the youngest player to win a Wimhledon singles title since Dod (left) won in 1887, at the age of 15 years and 285 days, writes John Roberts. Dod, the daughter of a wealthy Cheshire

cotton broker, had to win only three matches to win the title; Hingis, who will be 17 in September, would have to win seven matches at this year's championships, which are scheduled, weather permitting, to begin this afternoon. Hingis, a Slovakian-boru Swiss, has already

set many records. At the age of 13 she became the youngest winner of the Wimbledon junior girls' singles championship and last year she became the youngest winner of any Wimhledon senior title, when she wan the women's doubles with Helena Sukova.

She became the youngest winner of a Grand Slam singles title this century when she won the Australian Open championship in January. Wimbledon preview, Sport pages 6-15, including: Exclusive Martina Hingis interview, pages 12-13 How I lost to Tim Henman's grandmother, page 9

Today's order of play, page 6
Exclusive photograph: Andrew Buurm

#### Aitken's secretary was offered plum job to buy her silence

The secretary of the former minister Jonathan Aitken has said she was offered a lucrative job as an enticement to stop her giving damaging evidence against her former boss.

Valerie Scott claims the offer was made to her by an Arab business associate and personal friend of Mr Aitken, after information given by her about her former boss's financial dependence on Saudis had appeared in a World in Action documentary.

Ms Scott, 49, is due to make her allegation of the "joh for silence" offer in a new World in Action documentary tonight, following the humiliating withdrawal of Mr Aitken's libel action against the Guardian newspaper and Granada TV.

cia Azucki.

In the programme, Jonathan of Arabia, an actress playing the part of Miss Scott speaks about how Mr Aitken was subscryient to Prince Mohammed, the son of the Saudi King, and was once given a Jaguar car as a

present by Arabs.

Ms Scott said the Arab contact met her to offer her the job a few weeks after she was contacted by the programme. She said he made it clear that he did not wish either her or himself to get involved in a libel action.

In a further development, a former executive of the Independent Broadcasting Authority has revealed that he has seen documents proving Mr Aitken had taken money from Saudi sources to promote a pro-Arah bias in Ms Scott was Mr Aitken's secretary

from 1973 to 1979, helping in her last the news coverage of the television sta-year to organise his wedding to Loliacting secretary of the IBA, says he was shown the documents by Mr Aitken's

cousin Tim Aitken in February 1988. He added that because of IBA safeguards it would not have been possible for Mr Aitken to promote the propaganda, and thus he was "de-

ceiving his paymasters."

Mr Norrington told The Independent: "Coming from a man who was prominent MP in the governing par-ty, it was an inexcusable and contemptible act. I happen to believe the IBA's controls were such that he would not have achieved what he persuaded the Saudis to do in return for the money they handed over to finance the stake in TV-am."

Aitken aftermath, page 3 David Walker, page 15

Indonesia is the world's

fourth higgest beneficiary of British aid, with £57m last year.

Aides to Clare Short, the new

Secretary of State for Interna-

tional Development, have re-

assured supporters of Mr

Pakpahan that Labour policy to-

wards Indonesia will change.

"But there hasn't been anything

concrete," said one campaign-

er in London. We wrote to

Robin Cook about Muchtar

three weeks ago. So far we

## If you sponsor Shomita.

#### no one will have to sponsor her children

Little Shormta is just six years old and the only life she's known is one of hunger poverty and disease. But by the time she has children of her own, this could be a very

il could be one about families, about villagers working together to earn their own living. About children who can read and write and have a future. About a community that can treat the sick and is tree from fatal diseases. And if it

is, it is because you care enough to sponsor a child. in return, we'll keep you in touch with regular reports from our field workers plus a photograph and messages from the child you sponsor

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#### Britain urged to halt Indonesia arms trade His trial has been suspended one with which we don't have

Richard Lloyd Parry

A PILE OF 100

A CAKE WITH

CHERRY ON TO

Indonesia's most prominent prisoner of conscience has called on Tony Blair to stop arms sales to his country, amid plans for a high-level visit to Britain by a group of Indone-

sian generals. "As Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party, I hope that Tony Blair will give serious attention to the problems in Indonesia, including the labour situation," imprisoned trade union leader Muchtar Pakpahan said. "I

hope that he will stop selling Forces, hopes to visit Britain for weapons to Indonesia, weapons official talks. The question of which are used for human rights violations.'

In an interview with The Independent in his guarded hospital room in Jakarta, Mr Pakpahan appealed to Britain to apply pressure for his release, and to provide aid only to projects which contain guarantees of human rights.

The Independent has learned thal a senior delegation of military officers, led by General Feisal Tanjung, Commander in Chief of the Indonesian Armed

Timor. The manufacturer, THE BROADSHEET Business & City . . 18,19 Comment . . . . . . 14,15 Cryptic crossword \_20 Features ......13 Foreign News ....8-11

arms sales is very likely to be

Such contracts, although lu-

crative, would be controver-

sial, especially given the promise made by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, thal

"the Labour Government will

put human rights at the heart

of our foreign policy". Britain

has already supplied Hawk

fighters, which human rights

campaigners contend have been

used against the people of East

raised.

Pakpahan has been tried for the and other countries. "Of all the capital crime of subversion. Gazette ......16 Home News .....2-7 Leading articles ...14 

"Please link diplomatic aid to

human rights," Mr Pakpahan

said. "Make it a condition that

they allow freedom of associa-

He has been in detention

since last July, when he was ac-

cused by military officers, in-

cluding General Tanjung, of

"masterminding" pro-democ-

racy riots which rocked Jakar-

ta. These charges were quietly

dropped but, along with 14

Other democracy activists, Mr

tion to trade unions."

major powers, Britain is the only MEDIA + TABLOID Classified .....13-23

since March, when he became

seriously ill after suffering a

stroke and appendicitis. He has

a tumour on his lung, but his re-

quests to travel abroad for

treatment have received no of-

and for his trade union, the In-

donesian Prosperous Workers'

Union (SBSI), has been ex-

pressed internationally, and he

has met officials from the US.

France, Germany, Australia

Support for Mr Pakpahan

ficial response.

haven't had a reply."

elose relations."

Peadophile row Four suicides have thrown into question the methods of the French gendarmerie and judiciary after dawn raids on over 600 suspected consumers of child pornography.Page 10 palsy to walk.

Poison treatment A lethal poison developed for chemical warfare, botulinum toxin, is being tested as a treatment to help children who suffer from cerebral Obituaries .....16

Concise crossword .26 Radio & TV .... 27,28

#### significant shorts

#### Minister admits beef ban may last another year

The European ban on British beef might still be in place in a year's time, Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister said yesterday. Dr Cunningham said he could not put a date on when the ban might be lifted hut said it was likely that it would be done in a piecemeal way.

The minister, speaking oo BBC TV's On The Record, also said there would be a fundamental shake-up at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, but stressed that it would not be abolished altogether. Dr Cunningham said that fixing a date for a lifting of the ban imposed on British beef in the wake of the BSE scare would "not be sensible, it wouldn't be rational".

Asked whether the ban could still be in place a year from now, Dr Cunningham replied: "That is possible. And indeed the idea that the whole of the ban may be lifted in one go is also something we may need to ask questions about."

#### New pointer to fate of saint's body

Fresh evidence has emerged that the bones of England's greatest saint, Thomas Becket, are secretly buried at Canterbury Cathedral, it was revealed yesterday.

A former canon, Julian Bickersteth, told his godson Cecil Humphery-Smith, that he and three other men cut into a stone slab in the 1940s to confirm their suspicious that it covered Becket's unmarked grave.

Becket was Archbishop of Canterbury for eight years until he was murdered in 1170 by four knights from the court of Henry II with whom he had quarrelled. At the Reformation, Henry VIII wanted his memory erased from the cathedral.

#### Factory worker wins operatic prize



A Peking factory worker turned soprano has won the Singer of the World competition, which was held in Cardiff on Saturday.

Guang Yang, 26, (pictured) won £10,000 in the contest, as well as appearances at a London recital and concert engagements. Until 1991, Ms Guang worked in a factory, with colleagues standing in for her so she could attend singing lessons. She began formal voice-training and went on to win honours in Paris and Japan.

#### Clean up your act, Britain tells US

Tony Blair is leading the fight against the huild-up of greenhouse gases at a crucial world environment summit today - and is attempting to force the Americans to follow suit. The Prime Minister will urge the US and other developed oations to do the same as Britain and crack down on dangerous emissions in the battle to slow climate change.

Britain's tough message was reinforced by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, who warned that future generations of Americans would suffer unless the US made substantial cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. Oo the eve of the UN Earth Summit Two in New York, Mr Cook said: "Instead of cutting its carbon dioxide emissions, American continues to increase it. The higgest single problem is that the American public has not yet grasped that if it continues with its present lifestyle, theo it's going to make it impossible for its children or grandchildren to enjoy the kind of environment ... that Americans have today."

#### **BA calls in temps after strike threat**

British Airways has appointed the Manpower recruitment agency to employ hundreds of casual labour workers to cover any possible strike action taken by disgruntled staff. The airline is currently embroiled in two separate industrial disputes on pay restructuring and loog haul flight catering cootracts. Any strike action, likely to start in mid-July, could severely disrupt the peak holiday season.

A spokesman for BAsaid the company "obviously must ensure contingency plans" are in place to protect customers' interests. It has asked the agency to employ 600 staff for aircraft ramp

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time to face the music, says train-robber Biggs

drop, then I'm going to have to face it."

He was speaking as it was reported that an extradition treaty between the two countries could be just a few weeks away. A Home Office spokeswoman declined to comment

on the timetable for the treaty, but said: "It is in the process of being ratified at the moment. Once ratification has taken place, a decision can be taken on whether to request the extradition of Mr Biggs."

After hearing the latest developments, Biggs said:
"Nobody knows when the treaty is going to be rati-

fied and until there is a definite request for my return, I can't have a view on where I stand. "It's been going on since my son was 18, and i've

"I do have a Brazilian lawyer. I would obviously do whatever I can to avoid being sent back to England, and my lawyers would make a case for me staying here.

The 67-year-piditygitive said: "I'm too old to go running any tonger, and I'm not going to disappear.

"I the rest a number of reasons why I could be allowed ning any tonger, and I'm not going to disappear.

"If I bave to return to jail, so be it. I don't fancy such a prospect, but it that's the way the coin is going to would stay a long time in prison, in all probability I would drop, then I'm gollad to have to face it." die there, and I don't think Brazil would be keen to send me back on those terms.

"I am also the father of a Brazilian subject, although

"But the law is the law, if the extradition treaty does affect me, which I'm not sure about. Many people say it would be absurd to return me to prison. They tell me it's not like it was - I hope it's a more positive ex-

perience than it was,
"I'll do whatever I can, but if the outcome is that must return, I will not run away, I shall return."

Biggs was part of the gang which stole £2.6m from a Royal Mail train on 8 August, 1963. He escaped from Wandsworth prison in July, 1965, after serving just 15 months of his 30-year sentence.

#### Clarke tipped to front Forest flotation

Defeated in his attempt at the Tory leadership, the former chancellor Kenneth Clarke has been offered the job of floating his favourite football club, Nottingham Forest, on the stock market, it emerged

learned to live with it.

Mr Clarke, a lifelong Forest fan, has been in talks with the club's owner, Nigel Wray, with a view to becoming chairman of the holding company, ahead of flotation later this year. Ha would be in charge of the business of Nottingham Forest Plc, rather than the club's football

Mr Clarke has followed the fortunes of Forest since his grandfather took him there as a schoolboy and he has attended matches throughout his political career.

Larry Lloyd, a former player and now the club's press officer, said the move would not affect the position of the club'a current chairman, Irving Korn. "Who better to be chairman of Nottingham Forest PLC than the former Chancellor of the Exchequer?" he said.



It is an opportunity for Mr Clarke, who is returning to the backbenches after losing his £103,000-a-year Cabinet job on 1 May, to boost his backbench aglary of £43,000.

However, Mr Clarke told the Express on Sunday newspaper: "I have not had serious discussions about this. I have not decided what I will be doing in the future." Self-made Mr Wray, 48, who also owns the Saracens rugby club, is out of the country and was

unavailable for comment. Jojo Moyes

#### Fry tells of his lowest moment

The actor and writer Stephen Fry Is to disclose how he came within a second of turning on his car ignition and trying to kill himself with exhaust fumes. The admission comes during an interview for BBC Radio 4's In The Psychiatrist's Chair, to be hroadcast next Sun-

On the programme and in his memoirs, to be published in October, Fry will explain how close he came to committing suicide after he fled the play Cell Mates two years ago, because of depression. He says it was only a vision of

his parents that prevented him from going through with it. He tells the psychiatrist Dr An-

thony Clare: "I had my hand on the key and a duvet cover around the car door so the exhaust fumes would be kept in. I was deeply,

deeply unhappy and lonely."

Fry, who later this year will appear as Oscar Wilde in the film Wilde Life, which is already drawing rave reviews at previews, explains how he felt he had "no right" to be unhappy, particularly as people kept telling him how successful he was.

#### briefing

#### **GPs ill-prepared for patients** with learning difficulties

People with learning disabilities are getting a worse service from their GPs; despite needing more medical care than the average patient. Nearly six out of 10 GPs questioned for a survey for the charity. Manager could not identify all their regions with learning their patients. charity Mencap could not identify all their patients with learning disabilities, and four out of five said that their health care needs Poor communications, low expectations of GP services and bad were less well met.

past experiences meant that those with learning disabilities made a lower than average number of visits to their GPs - despite having greater than average medical needs. As a result, large numbers of people with learning disabilities weot for long periods without

Only 15 per cent of GPs had received formal training in dealing with learning disabilities. The result was that between a third and a half of patients said that they did not understand what the doctor said in consultations, and eight out of 10 felt their GP did not spend enough time with them.

#### MEDICINE

#### 'Super aspirin' for post-op care

A new kind of "super-aspirin" can dramatically reduce the risk of complications and death, following one of the latest types of heart

computations and death, following one of the latest types of additional surgery, a study has shown.

About 40 per cent of patients needing heart surgery now have a procedure called angioplasty, which involves opening up a blocked procedure vith a tiny balloon or metal mesh tube. The alternative is a artery with a tiny balloon or metal mesh tube. bypass operation, in which surgeons open up the chest and insert a vein to re-route the blood supplying the heart around the

At present the risk of having a heart attack, dying, or needing further surgery in the 30 days after angioplasty is 11.7 per cent. But the new research has shown that the risk drops to between 5.2 per the new research has shown that the new research has shown that the risk drops to between 32 percent and 5.4 per cent when patients are given the "super-aspirin". ReoPro in conjunction with the anticoagulant drug heparin. The findings, from a study in the US and Canada, were published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine.

#### TRANSPORT

#### Older drivers shouldn't be penalised

Older drivers must be helped to continue driving safely, not forced off the road hy legislation, according to a report published today. Europe's population of drivers over the age of 65 is growing by 1.4 per ceot a year, faster than any other age group, according to the AA Foundation for Road Safety Research.

"Older drivers are undeniably at greater risk than younger drivers, but this is because they are more susceptible to injury, not because they are involved in more accidents," says the author, Geoff Maycock.

Mr Maycock added that there was no reason to legislate against older drivers because age in itself is no guide to driving ability.

"But there is a strong case for devising ways of helping older people to continue to drive safely for as loog as possible."

#### Warning on minimum wage

A minimum wage would "significantly reduce" employment, the Government is warned today, in a series of articles by economists. The articles, published in the journal of the Institute of Economic

Affairs, point to evidence in other countries.

Professor Walter Oi, an American labour economist, writes: "A policy that can raise the wages of those at the bottom of the wage ladder with no joh losses is remarkable. It rivals a perpetual

motion machine or alchemy," be said. The professor argued that fringe benefits, such as training. could be reduced by a minimum wage. "Minimum wage laws can raise cash wages, but the consequences are fewer jobs and a

deterioration of the utilitarian value of the joh package." The Government is setting up a Low Pay Commission to take evidence from unions and employers, over the next year, on what level a minimom wage should be set.

#### DAILY POEM

**Making the Angels** By Imtiaz Dharker

A numbling of angels; A frenzy of wings, churning ait, turning the world on a rare somersault: sounds stripped bare on the clatter of stars that spin against the web of night, brighmess-tom. This is a time to be born.

This, the maker's moment of play. "Today," he says, "I will make angels," And there they are, triumphant, air-tossed, a little breathless, sun trapped in their hair and wings as they struggle to fly: A host of fledgling angels, spat like grape-serrt out of a newmade, unsuspecting sky.

Imtiaz Dharker was born io Lahore, grew up in Glasgow and oow works as a documentary film-maker in Bombay. Postcards from god (Bloodaxe Books, £8.95) combines work from two collections first. published in India, and is illustrated with her own drawings.

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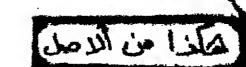
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nin' for post-op care



The Aitken aftermath Middle Eastern associates melt away as ex-minister loses place on Privy Council

## Disgraced at home, deserted abroad

Away from the deluge of contempt and condemnation unteashed by his humiliating libel defeat, Jonathan Aitken is desperately trying to cling on to his But the former Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Defence procurement minister is now just a source of embarrassment and a liability to his former Middle-Eastern commercial partners and they are melting away.

say Arab sources. The future looks grim for Mr Aitken. The Guardian is sending material to Scotland Yard over allegations that the former minister committed perjury and attempted to pervert the course of justice, A police investigation is due to start later this week under a senior officer from the yard's Specialist Operations section. The maximum sentence for perjury is seven years, while for perversion of the course of justice it is life imprisonment and, or, a fine.

ation of being struck off from the list of Privy Councillors, only the second man this century to be so, after Sir Edgar Speyer who was convicted of collaborating with the Germans during the First World War. Senior Privy lifeboat, the Saudi connection. Councillors have asked him privately to step down to spare the Queen emharrassment.

One political colleague who defended him on the day of trial collapse is having second

thoughts.

Tory MP and diarist Alan Clark said: "I wouldn't have been so generous in defending Mr Aitken on Newsnight if I had been aware of the way he used his daughter during the trial". Mr Aitken had produced a statement from daughter, Victoria, in court to back his false account regarding the notorious Paris Ritz stay.

Mr Aitken is believed to have left the country at the end of last week as his lawyers announced his withdrawal from the libel action against The Guardian and Granada TV. His mother said yesterday



Happy family? The Aitkens at home. Alan Clark yesterday said he regretted the way in which Aitken's daughter Victoria was used in the trial

Photograph: Rex

planning a book about his downfall, and would write it in the near future at her home in Ibiza. But, it is believed, he has also placed a series of calls to his former Arah husiness partners in Riyadh.

One source claimed: "There have been expressions of sympathy from the Saudis about what has happened to him. But that is a long way from resum-ing the kind of close business Mr Aitken has caused the rep-utation of the Royal Family".

position then got him the fat deals; his position now means he will no longer open doors in London, hut have them shut in

His Saudi friends will also have to be very careful. There is always jockeying for political aod financial power at the Saudi court, and rival factions will seize on just how much damage

Two of Mr Aitken's closest business associates, Prince Mohammed, son of the Saudi King, and Said Ayas, are believed to be in Riyadh. Mr Aitken was a director of Al-Bilad a company owned by the Prince until he became a minister. During his stay at the Paris Ritz hotel in September 1993 the then Defence Procurement minister met Mr Ayas while the Prince, through

an assistant, paid the the bill for

pitality was a breach of guidelines on ministerial conduct. Syrian-born Wafic Said, was also an important contact. But Mr Said, who has become Oxford University's higgest postwar henefactor, with a gift of £20m for a husiness school, is also said to be keen to distance

himself from Mr Ailkeo. If the defamation case had continued, further details emharrassing to the Saudis were Mr Aitken had visited the Paris due to aired regarding arms-

trading. The court would have been told that on 10 September 1993 Mr Aitken received a letter at his MoD office from Lord Justice Scott's inquiry. The judge was investigating allegations, obtained by British intelligence, that powerful Saudis were involved in secret deals diverting weapons to Iraq. It also mentioned allegations of his

own involvement. Within days.

Ayas. Subsequently he provided a statement to Lord Justice Scott saying "a small number of Saudi Arabians, two of them junior members of the Royal family, were clients of the Aitken Hume Bank".

But Prince Mohammed and other Saudis had been importaot investors in the bank and other Aitken ventures. The hank had also been supported

#### his stay. Accepting Saudi hos-The spy, the sex scandal and a faked suicide: the royal outcasts

The former Cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken is likely to be struck off the Privy Council, a fate previously suffered only by a coovicted spy, a procurer of call girls and a man who faked his own death to avoid

Privy Council sources said yesterday that they were "examining the procedures" by which Mr Aitken could be removed from the Queen's inner circle of advisers. The of his title "Right Honourable", has not

Last week Mr Aitken dropped his libel case against the Guardian newspaper and Granada Television after evidence emerged which proved he had lied under oath, and may have persuaded his teenage daughter to do the same. The decision to consider his position on the Privy Council is a clear indicator of the severity with which Mr Aitken's behaviour has been viewed in es-

tablishment circles. The appointment is usually held for life

Jojo Moyes on the shame of dismissal from the Queen's inner circle

and he would become only the second person this century to be struck off; the first being Sir Edgar Speyer, a financier, promi-nent philanthropist and friend of the Lib-eral Prime Minister Herbert Asquith. Sir Edgar's appointment, along with his nat-uralisation from American citizenship was revoked in 1921 after

First World War. Only two other ministers have resigned. from the council this century and the degree and enduring nature of their public sgrace will also serve as an uncomfortable reminder to Mr Aitken.

The actions of former Tory minister John Profumo, whose name became a byword for political sex scandals, led to an addition in Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice, the parliamentarians' hible: "In 1963, the House resolved that, in making a personal state-

er admitted not to be true, a former member had been guilty of a grave contempt." Mr Profumo, the war minister, had denied sleeping with Christine Keeler, a prostitute. hut later admitted lying to the House. The other, Labour MP John Stonehouse.

for money and the love of his mistress, Sheila Buckley, he faked his own death to profit from insurance policies. His apparent suicide off Miami Beach was so con vincing that it elicited thousands of messages of sympathy from the public and MPs held a minute's silence in the House of Commons. He began a new life in Australia hut was discovered, brought back to Britain and jailed. The judge, Mr Justice Eveleigh, called him "a sophisticated and

skilful confideoce trickster". Only the Queen has the power to strip

ment which contained words which he lat- a Privy Counsellor of his office, which is granted for life, on the advice of the Privy Council itself. "We are looking at what the procedures are," a senior Privy Council source said yesterday.

Appointment to the largely ceremonial post is seen as a great honour. Sources said vesterday that Mr Aitker given a "decent interval" of time to make up his mind whether to offer his resigna-



Struck off: Sir Edgar Speyer (left), John Profumo and John Stonehouse

#### Labour's celebrity followers rally to the hunting horn



Pressing for choice: Leave **Country Sports** Alone campaigners from top left, Melvyn Bragg, John Mortimer, Sir David Puttnam and Sir group will be lobbying hard against the Private fember's Bill tabled last week by Michael Foster, who is calling for a ban on all hunting

Friedrich Engels, co-author of The Communist Manifesto, had no qualms about riding out with the Cheshire Hunt while studying the conditions of the English working class.

His ideological heirs in today's Labour Party see things differently. But while opposition to fox hunting is now common currency among most left-wingers, a celebrity-studded group of Labour supporters is preparing to defend if to the hilt.

These are people who see no reason why a passion for social justice should preclude the pleasure of pursuing small mammals across the countryside. They include John Mortimer, the harrister and novelist, Sir David Puttnam, the film director, Sir Jeremy Isaacs, former director of the Royal Opera House, and Melvyn Bragg, the broadcaster. Three years ago they found-

ny, is secretary. Over the coming months they plan an intensive lobbying in the House of Commons to dissuade MPs from backing a Private Member's Bill that would outlaw all

forms of hunting with hounds. Some of these prominent figures, such as Baroness Mallalieu, the QC and Labour peer, ride out regularly with lo-cal hunts; others, such as Mr Bragg, would not be seen dead in a red coat and white breeches. All are sceptical about the arguments of the abolitionists and believe it would be misguided to legislate country

sports out of existence. In contrast to the British Field Sports Society, which has always been closely associated with the Conservative Party, this group is a forum for Labour sympathisers. Its founders felt that Labour was in thrall to the animal rights lobby and should

does not necessarily divide

along class lines. new urgency by the Bill tabled by Michael Foster, MP for Worcester, last week. It has already received the private support of the Government, which has indicated that it may assist

its passage through parliament. The pro-hunting campaign, meanwhile, will acquire momentum next month, when up to 100,000 field sports enthusinsts and rural workers from all over the country converge on London for a mass rally in Hyde Park. Lady Mallalieu, chairman of

Leave Country Sports Alone, is to give a keynote speech at the rally. She says support for the group is growing rapidly among grassroots Labour members. "A lot of people who neither hunt, shoot nor fish take the view that in a free society, provided these sports are properly regu-

lated, it should be a matter of individual choice whether you take part or not," she said. "They believe that if you can't convince people by the strength of your arguments, you shouldn't seek a law to ban

with hounds

The Mortimers and their fellow celebrities are dismissed by opponents as champagne socialists with easy access to circles of influence. Indeed, their campaign was hatched over lunch at The Ivy, the London restaurant beloved of politi-

cians, actors and media types. Penny Mortimer, who rides regularly with the Exmoor hunt, scoffs at the suggestion that it is an incongruous activity for a Labour Party member. "In areas like the Pennines and South Wales, lorry drivers and exminers follow the hunt," she said. "The popular image is of toffs on horseback riding roughshod over the peasants It's just not like that."

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CYPRUS (TURKISH)	67.45	31	54%	SOUTH AFRICA	101.66	38	63%
EGYPT	126.34	60	53%	SRI LANKA	133.25	70	48%
GEORGIA	121.66	44	57%	SL LUCIA	77.97	40	49%
GHANA		52		THAILAND	108.10	54	50%
	131.19		60 <del>%</del>	TURKEY	67.45	26	61%
GUINEA	135.22	70	48%	UAE	101.66		
HONG KONG	68.78	. 29	58%			50	51%
INDIA	119.85	55	54%	URUGUAY	131.19	. 60	54%
IRELAND	22.89	16	30%	USA	23.62	10	58%
ISRAEL	79.45	38	52%	USSR (Russia)	<b>79.4</b> 5	40	50%
JAMAICA	77.97	40	48%	VENEZUELA	131.19	60	54%



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# Schools' reserves to ease budget freeze

Judith Judd and Mary Dejevsky

Local authority leaders are urging ministers to use schools' balances to help fill a £1bn hole in the education budget. One scheme being drawn up would set up a system in which local authorities pooled rich schools' balances to allow poor schools to borrow money against them.

An estimated £600m is held in reserves by schools throughout the country but the amounts vary widely. While some schools are thousands of pounds in debt, others have up to £500,000 squirrelled away.

Education ministers fear that the

Education ministers fear that the Government's refusal to abandon the Conservatives' public spending targets for the next two years will make it impossible for them to fulfil their manifesto pledges. However, there were hints last night that there could be more money for education before that time is up.

At the G7 group of nations' summit in Denver, Colarado, British officials said that if the Government's Welfare to Work programme was successful social security budgets might fall next year and that money could be put into the education service

be put into the education service.

However the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, squashed speculation that there could be a public spending round later this year. Any shift of resources between departments would come after a full review of government spending, he said. But be predicted: "We can be far more flexible within and across departments as a result of this public spending review."

Meanwhile, ministers will be un-

der pressure this year to do what the Conservatives used to do use school and local authority balances as an argument against bigger increases in education spending.

Councils are warning that the position will be even worse than it was two years ago when parents and governors took to the streets in protest against education cuts. Around 10,000 teachers were either made redundant or not replaced. Figures in

an unpublished report from the Local Government Association show that, while existing government spending plans allow for a rise of only 1 or 1.2 per cent on local government spending next year, an increase of 2.8 per cent will be needed to maintain services and a further 2.5 per cent to keep pace with inflation.

A survey of local authorities shows that they are are spending around £19bn on education this year. They estimate that they need about £1bn more just to stand still. The association calculates that money for capital – this year £422m – will need to more than double if any inroads are to be made into the backlog of building work.

For the last two years, authorities have cut back on social services such as old people's homes to pay for education. They have also raided their reserves. Even so, class sizes have risen. Graham Lane, of the Local Government.

Graham Lane, of the Local Government Association, said: "The Government has to find a way of funding the teachers' pay settlement this year. Otherwise, the situation will be worse than it was in 1995. It would mean massive increases in class izes."

He said the money in schools' balances could be used to tide over the education service until more cash was released at the end of the two-year freeze. Under schemes already operating in one or two authorities such as his own, Newham, in east London, the authority bolds school balances collectively and allows all schools, whatever the size of their contribution, to borrow against the total

tion, to borrow against the total.

Authorities would like the system to extended nationwide. But Don Foster, the Liberal Democrats' education spokesman, said: "This would mean asking schools to take a risk now against the very uncertain promise of more money in two years' time. It would be tough on those schools which have deliberately saved money for projects."

money for projects."

Mr Lane said schools should keep some money in reserve but believed that anything over 3 or 4 per cent should be clawed back and redirected to another school.



Group of four: Hillary Clinton admiring the necklace of Cherie Rigir as their hyphanda lock on desired to Good the support in Domer. Photograph: Paul Hanna/Reutless

## 'We'll go ahead without you,' IRA told



McGuinness: Praised approach of Blair's government

David McKittrick and Mary Dejevsky

Sinn Fein yesterday beld out what it clearly intended to be viewed as an olive branch to the Government yesterday, with a speech from Martin McGuinness contending that all was not lost in the flagging a second

not lost in the flagging peace process.

Declaring that Sinn Fein was "working very hard to save the situation." the republican MP signalled that weapons decommissioning was the biggest single obstacle in the way of a renewed IRA ceasefire.

In America, meanwhile, Tony Blair, attending the Summit of Eight in Democratible was peaced Sine Fein in

In America, meanwhile, Tony Blair, attending the Summit of Eight in Denver, publicly warned Sinn Fein in the strongest possible terms that be would not wait indefinitely for it to join the multi-party talks.

In an interview with the US ABC

the distribution of the transfer of the distribution of the distri

because we won't." Mr McGuinness's overture will clearly be treated with the utmost suspicion by the government in the wake of last week's IRA murders of two RUC officers in Co Armagh. The shootings were regarded both as the most brutal possible disruption of Sinn Fein's contacts with the Government and, happening as they did within miles of

vere provocation to loyalist groups.

Mr McGuinness himself acknowledged that the IRA killings, which he coupled with continuing loyalist violence, had helped create "a climate of fear and of apprehension". Then, most unusually for a Sinn Fein leader speaking to a republican audience, he went on to commend the Blair government for himself for the second sec

the Drumcree parade flashpoint, a se-

Ernment for its approach.

Little of this is likely to be taken at face value by either the Government or others involved in British or Irish politics. Most immediately it may be viewed as an attempt to influence

the content of an important statement on Northern Ireland which it is reported Mr Blair may make on Wednesday

Most observers will have difficulty in working out whether Mr McGuinness was waving or almost drowning in the flood of condemnation which followed the killings of the policemen. But the speech was clearly aimed at reassuring those who retain faith in the peace process that it is not yet over

is not yet over.

Mr McGuinness said Mr Blair was taking up a position which was an advance on that adopted by John Major, adding: "Some might feel that the new government is moving very far indeed." He also commended the Government for addressing, "in varying degrees". Sinn Fein's concerns.

The message from republicans is that no IRA ceasefire is to be expected while the decommissioning issue remains unresolved. Republicans want to remove any possibility that, having

been admitted to talks in the event of a ceasefire. Unionist parties might have the power to have them ejected if no IRA arms are handed over.

Ken Maginnis, the Ulster Unionisi MP, vesterday argued that the IRA
was "politically irredeemable" and
said he would not be taken in by any
sort of temporary ceasefire or hollow
gesture by the IRA.

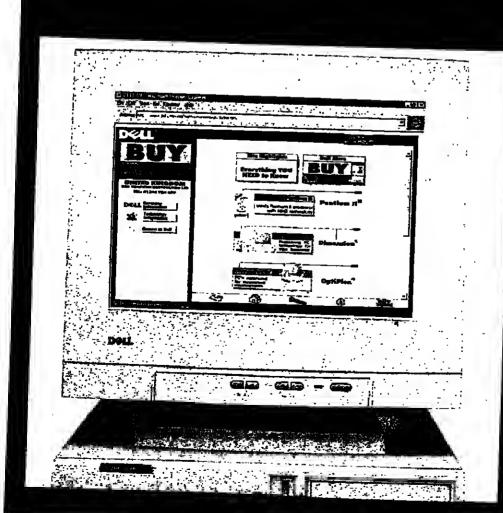
In Bellaghy, Co Londonderry, yes-

In Bellaghy, Co Londonderry, yeslerday, a potentially difficult Orange parade passed off without incident. A large-scale RUC operation partially re-routed the march to keep itaway from protesting nationalist residents.

residents. Meanwhile, it has now been establisbed that a hoobytrap bomb which exploded beneuth a car in Belfast on Saturday was the work of localists intent on killing a Catholic man who had served a juil sentence for republican offences. He and another man were in the car when the device went off but were only slightly injured.

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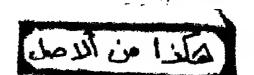


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## Health authority targets tobacco giants

Sameena Ahmad, Jeremy Laurance and David Usborne in New York

A British health authority will today begin legal action against the tobacco industry to recovor the costs of providing medical care for smokers following the landmark £225hn settlement made in the United States over the weekend.

the United Kingdom played

style legal settlement here, ar- them less addictive. The aim is burden on the National Health Gallaber, which together acguing that there was no justification for a similar deal.

Terry Hanafin, chief executive of Croydon Health Authority, said that he would today be consulting legal firms about hringing an action against the tohacco companies and would seek advice from the Department of Health and from the antismoking pressure group, Ash.

"We are interested not only But tobacco manufacturers in in seeking financial compensation but also in reducing nico-

ultimately to improve peoples' health," Mr Hanafin said. Croydon has asked the other 11 authorities in the south Thames region to share the costs.

Last year. Ash failed in an application for legal aid to bring a group action against two tobac-co companies. Gallaher and Imperial Tobacco, on behalf of 40 smokers who had contracted lung cancer and other diseases. However, legal experts said yesterday the United Kingdom played tion but also in reducing nico-down the likelihood of a US- tine levels in cigarettes to make tween smoking and the medical

Service would be easier than proving it in individual cases.

Amanda Sandford, a spokeswoman for Ash, said that the US settlement would have implications for the UK industry while the British Medical Association said it opened the way for a similar settlement here. "Companies here may be forced to come to some sort of deal. This is a good opportunity for smokers to come forward and pressure for compensation," Ms Sandford said. But Imperial Tobacco and £8.5hn in cigarette taxes in the

count for almost four-fifths of the 80 billion eigarettes sold in the UK each year, said there were no grounds for a similar settlement. Gareth Davis, chief executive of Imperial Tobacco which sells Embassy and Superkings hrands. said: "The US situation has no bearing on the UK. This deal is basically an extra tax on cigarettes in the US, where excise duties are the lowest in the world. UK tobacco companies pay £10.5hn to the exchequer compared to

times higger." lan Birks. a spokesman for Gallaher, said: We will never settle. We will defend all cases vigorously. There was a rocky reception

over the weekend for the US settlement, as veteran foes of the industry challenged whether it would be sufficient to tame cigarette manufacturers and mificantly reduce smoking.

Michael Moore, the Attornev-General of Mississippi and the principal player in recling in the tobacco firms, predicted

for the children of this country. So, that's why I have faith that we'll get their support".

But the former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), David Kessler, who more than anyone helped turn the political tide against the industry, reiterated his doubts about the package. warning that the payout would be used to "line people's pock-ets" rather than fund public

US, where the market is six that President Bill Clinton health measures. He also pointwould back the deal. "President ed to fine print which suggests Chinton wants to do something that the FDA's powers over nicotine use would be limited.

In Congress, Orrin Hatch. who heads the Senate Judiciary Committee, hinted that reviewing the package and putting it into law would be a slow and agonising process. "There are some 10 committees on Capi-tol Hill that all will be claiming some part of this settlement. So it is not going to be an easy thing," he said yesterday.

Leading article, page 14

#### The deadly poison that helps disabled children to walk

Jeremy Laurance Health Editor

A lethal poison developed for chemical warfare is being tested as a treatment for handicapped children.

In the first double blind controlled trial of bordinum toxin, a teaspoonful of which would be enough to kill 100,000 people, doctors in Leeds are using the poison io treat children with cerebral palsy, to betp

The toxin causes a dangerous form of food poisoning known as hotulism, a creeping paralysis whose first signs are difficulty in swallowing and speaking. Even with prompt treatment with an antitoxin. it kills one in four of those affected,

It works by blocking nerve transmission which weakens or paralyses muscles with unusually long-lasting effects. As a lethal. tasteless, potent poison it attracted the interest of chemical warfare experts.

could be put to medical use, and have experimented over the last 10 years with the injection of tiny amounts of the toxin to case a range of disorders caused by involuntary contraction of the muscles. Examples include squinting, hlepharospasm. in which the eyes are repeatedly screwed up, and torticollis, in which the head is pulled over to one side.

Until now, however, the treatment has only been tried on individual patients and it has been impossible to tell whether the improvement noted in them has been due to the placebo effect - the patient's helief that a treatment will bring improvement.

Researchers at St James's University

with cerebral palsy - half of whom will he given injections of the toxin and half injections of an inert substance. The injections will be coded so that neither the children, nor their parents, nor the doctors administering them know which is

After three months, the code will be hroken and the toxin offered to those children not getting it. Dr Tim Ubhi, who is coordinating the study, said: "It is the most lethal toxin around, yet its potential is amazing. It is probably the biggest advance in the treatment of cerebral palsy for decades. People have been using it ad hoe for some time, but we have no firm evidence that it

Dr Ubhi said a pilot trial in Leeds, involving 20 children, found that 18 improved with the injection and none deteriorated, Doctors in London and Belfast have also used it successfully.

Children whose legs are affected by cere-Doctors discovered that the same effect heal palsy suffer contracture of the muscles, which causes the limbs to twist, making walking difficult or impossible. The injection allows the muscles to relax and stretch to a more normal length, which may also increase the child's growth.

"We think that once we have proved it works, it will be used by district hospitals very quickly. It looks that good," Dr Ubhi

Richard Parnell, research officer at Scope, the charity for people with cerebral palsy, said the toxin was not a licensed drug and required further tests on its long-term effects. "The evidence is that it works on selected children but it is not a catch-all solution. It is potentially a very exciting Hospital in Leeds have selected 5tl children - treatment but we have to be cautious.





Stepping out: Francesca Capitano (left) who had great difficulty walking, because of her cerebral palsy. Now, after taking part in the St James's Hospital botulinum trial. she can get around much more easily (above)

Photograph: Asadour Guzelian

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#### 6 Now she can do what her friends do. She is just so happy ?

Francesca Capitano has worn splints on her legs for much of her short life. She was a premature haby and suffered bleeding into her brain when she was hve-days-old, which left her with hrain damage. Now aged nine, it is mainly her legs that are affected, and she has always hated wearing splints, hecause they made her feel different from other chil-

When doctors offered her a new treatment, her parents, Christine and Tony. of Penders Fields. Leeds, did not Jesitate. Christine said: "I knew it was toxie but the dose was minimal and I could always take her to the hospital if there

CASE STUDY

were problems. I have a lot of faith in the doctors. Francesca had two injections of bont-

linum toxin, followed by two more, six months later, at St James's Hospital. Christine noticed the difference within days. "I didn't dare say anything because I was afraid to believe it. The doctors told us nothing because they didn't want to raise our hopes. Then others in the family and at her school started noticing

she was walking hetter." By relaxing the muscles in her twisted legs, the injections not only made it easi-er for her to walk, they relaxed her whole body. Suddenly, a whole range of activities, from skipping to swiming to riding a hicycle became possible for her. Since last October she has only worn her

splints at night. Christine said: "We used to have tears when she couldn't ride a hike. Francesca is a very determined child and she would keep a hrave face at school, but when she came home she would be in floods of tears. Now she can do what other children do. She is just so happy that she can keep up with her friends. It has given her confidence a real hoost."



Hague: Gone for experience Fran Abrams

Political Correspondent

William Hague was criticised for pursuing "yesterday's agenda" after his weekend decision to hring leading figures out of re-tirement into his team. Some party sources claimed that Mr Hague's decision to choose experience rather than youth - 11 of his 20-strong shadow team have been in the Cahinet and a further six have served as ministers - would need rethinking before the next general election. One former minister said: "It

has get to sound like tomorrow's agenda, not yesterday's. There are people there who will give him advice on the hasis of experience, but I think he needs to carve out his own way."

However, the new leader's staff denied rumours that oldstagers such as Norman Fowler. shadow spokesman for the environment transport and the regions, and the former party chairman Brian Mawhinney. now shadow Home Secretary, would probably stand aside hefore the next election. Francis Maude and John Maples, now back as shadow heritage and

#### Hague selects team to pursue 'yesterday's agenda'

health secretaries, both served as ministers before tosing their seats in the 1992 election.

However, MPs from all sides of the Conservative Party were determined to show unity tast night despite reports that the protracted leadership contest had led to deep bitterness between rival comps. It emerged that half a dozen former Redwood supporters were sent white feathers anonymously in the post after switching to Mr Hague when their man formed an alliance with Kenneth

Clarke, though Mr Redwood did not know of the incident. Three MPs who served in the last Cabinet - Kenneth Clarke. John Gummer and Virginia Bottomley - told Mr Hague that they did not wish to serve in his

shadow team. All those who wanted jobs were included. Yesterday Mr Clarke was considering an offer of the chairman's job at Nottingham Forest football club, while Mr Gummer and Mrs Buttomley were preparing for life on the hack henches. Both said they

#### The Shadow Cabinet

PETER LILLEY, Shadow Chancellor (with overall responsibility for the development of party policy) MICHAEL HOWARD, Shadow Foreign Secretary Or Brian Mawhinney, Shadow Home Secretary LORD PARKINSON, Conservative Pary Chairman STEPHEN DORRELL, Shadow Educa-

Ilon and Employment Secretary GILLIAN SHEPHARD, Shadow Leeder of the Commons (also shador Chancelor of the Duchy of Lang LORD CRANBOURNE Shador if the Lords SIR GEORGE YOUNG, Shadow De-

lence Secretary JOHN REDWOOD, Shadow Trade and Industry Secretary
MICHAEL ANCRAM, Constitutional Al-

sibility for Scottish and Welsh Issues) SIR NORMAN FOWLER, Shadow Sec-relary for the Environment. Transport and the Residence and the Regions DAVID CURRY, Shedow Minister of Agri-Culture, Fisheries and Food
ALASTAIR GOOTLAIL. Shadow International Development Secretary
Idviii HeathicOat-Amorry, Shadow
Chel Secretary to the Treasury
FRANCIS MAUDE. Shadow National fortage Secretary ANOREW MACKAY, Shadow North

retary IAIN OUNCAN-SMITH, Shadow Social Security Secretary
JAMES ARBUTHNOT, Opposition Chief
When in the Commons



had decided to leave office hefore Mr Hague was elected. Mr Gummer said: "I decided after the election that I felt I had been a minister for 17 years and I wanted a certain amount of freedom to do the things I am most interested in. I will be doing environmental

Mrs Bottomley said she intended to speak in the Commons on a range of issues in future. "I have had some tremendous jobs in different departments, but I thought it was time to be free and to let a new

generation take over," she said. A Tory party spokesman denied that any of the appointments, apart from that of Cecil Parkinson as party chairman, were short-term. "It is a cabinet of all the talents. It is inclusive of the leadership contenders, it is halanced and it gives us a fresh start in terms of new people being brought in. There is a minority of people

from the old cahinet," he said. Yesterday Lord Parkinson was contemplating the task of rebuilding the party and fulfilling Mr Hague's pledge to don-ble its membership to 600,000.



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happy





Tea time: Soldiers from the Diehard Company of the 57th Middlesex Regiment queuing for refreshments after attending a service and parade at St Paul's Cathedral, in London, yesterday to mark the 100th anniversary of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Re-enactment regiments from as far afield as Canada and Australia attended the event Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

## Rail firm pays for disruption

Randeep Ramesh Transport Correspondent

The private train operator that runs Britain's fastest railway has seen its cash surpluses wiped out by rising costs and a series of unforeseen disruptions, according to leaked documents obtained by The Independent.

Great North Eastern Rail-

way, owned by freight giant Sea Containers, runs the flagship East Coast rouse which links London to Scotland. Despite recording a 7 per cent increase in passenger numbers last year, recent performance has been "poor due to security alerts ... and trends for cost to run above hudget".

run above hudget".

Last year the company earned £258m from ticket sales and claimed in January to be "profitable". But according in its internal "core brief" for April this year, the "overall effect [of the delays] is to wipe out the income and bottom line surpluses that have been built up over the first three periods". The memo continues: "We have

now lost our cushion and will be very vulnerable to any further disruptions or unforceseen events affecting our finances."

Although considered one of the most potentially profitable lines, GNER's passenger numbers dropped earlier this year after major signalling failure closed parts of the network for a day and coded bomb warnings

shul down 70 miles of track.
Chris Garnett, the company's chief executive, said: "It was a four-week hiccup. Passenger numbers are back up and we are on target in make a profit again."

He said the delays showed that if passengers believed the system was "unreliable", then "they just go to the airlines and we then have to win them back".

Also hit in April were the number of minutes that trains were delayed. The total "fleet" delay was 4,123 minutes – up by 1,015 minutes on the last period. The company briefing hlames the large rise on "the knock-on effects of the various disruptions on station workings..."

# Ailing boarding schools see revival in fortunes

Judith Judd Education Editor

Boarding schools may be coming back into fashion, according to oew figures published today. A survey by the Independent Schools Information Service (Isis) shows that the heads of four out of five boarding schools believe their schools prospects are brighter than they were a year ago.

About 400 schools were asked for their views just after the annual independent schools' census showed that the decline in boarding was the smallest for a decade.

The private roll call



Wall game: Serious exercise on the playing fields at Eton

Schools with boarders 1996: 829. Total pupils 1985: 126,000. Total pupils 1996: 90,000.

Total of boarders from service families 1988: 22,000.
Total of boarders from service families 1996:

10,000.
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Boarding oumbers have been shrinking steadily. Pareots appear to be increasingly reluctant to send their children away from home, cuts in the armed services have meant that fewer service children are seot to board and the recessioo has led to more families choosing the cheaper optioo of day schools.

A generation of parents who suffered cold showers and fagging has proved difficult to persuade that boarding life has changed. But Isis says that the pattern may be shifting as parents get the message that schools have become less rigid and austere. Returning economic confideoce has also

The survey found that 36 per cent of schools had received more visits from prospective boarding parents this year, while 19 per cent had received fewer. Even more – 43 per cent – reported more parental inquiries about boarding while 16 per cent reported fewer. Head teachers at most schools where boarders were much more confident about the future than those where only a minority of pupils board.

pupils board.

One of the reasons for the revival in boarding may be the growth of flexi-boarding which allows pupils to sample boarding for one or two nights.

ing for one or two nights.

Robin Lewis, bead of Terra
Nova school in Cheshire, said
that Dinner Party Night, in
which as many as 30 extra
boarders spend the night at
school with popcorn and a
widescreen video while their
parents go out, had proved an
outstanding success.

He added: "It helps to ensure
that we keep Saturday school

He added: "It helps to ensure that we keep Saturday school and as soon as they discover boarding, many of the children agitate to become boarders themselves. We have a very high conversioo rate."

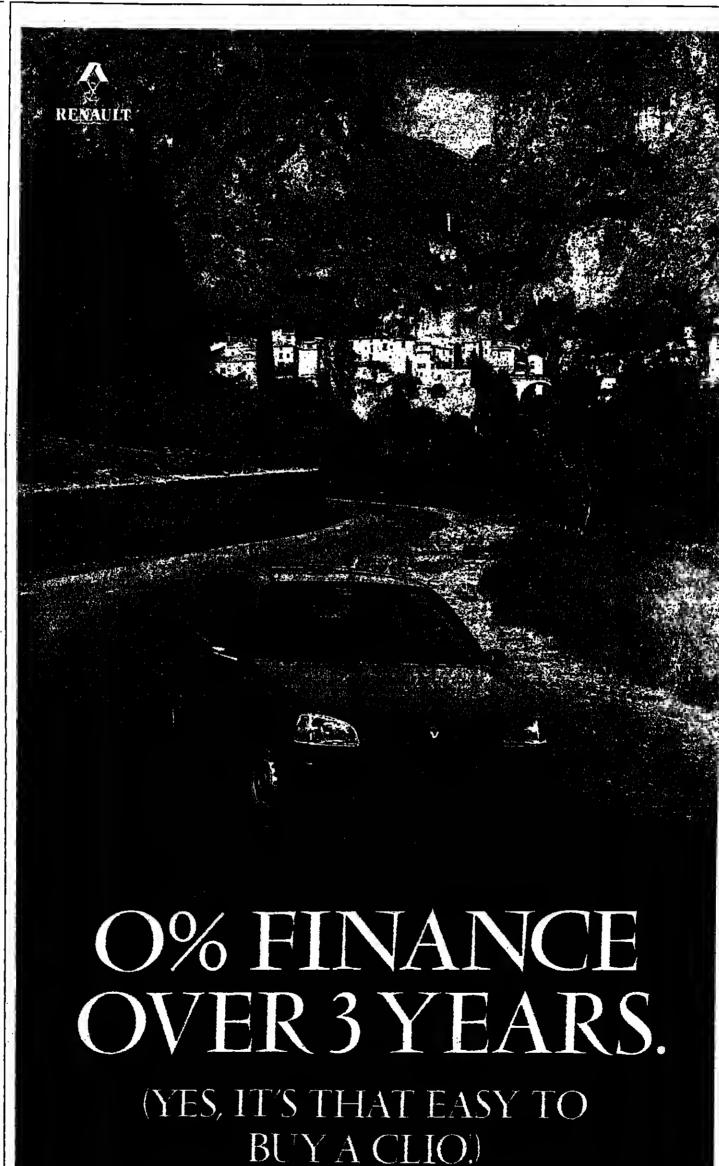
Belmont, the co-educational prep school for Mill Hill School in north London, closed its boarding house 10 years ago but is opening a new one in September. John Hawkins, the head, said there was demand for weekly boarding from single parents and from families in which both parents led busy lives.

"It means they can feel secure that their children are in the care of our teachers rather than leaving them with nannies."

David Woodhead, the director of Isis, said: "It is too early to claim a full-scale boarding revival. There is considerable regional variation and many schools are still feeling the effects of a long and debilitating decline in demand. But the message about modern boarding is clearly getting through to more and more paragraphs."

ents."

The revival is most marked in the south-east and, to a lesser extent in the South-west, and least noticeable in the North, the survey shows.



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/ APR	Monthly Repayments	£202.17 x 48
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	Deposit	£4,120.00
	Monthly Repayments	£114,44 x 36
	Total Credit Price	£8,240.00

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#### Hong Kong handover

## China plans law to halt protests

**Stephen Vines** Hong Kong

Hong Kong's incoming administration is trying to avert demonstrations marring the start of Chinese sovereignty over the territory.

It is using a carrot and a stick. The stick comes in the form of the administration's determination to give tougher laws on the holding of demonstrations which will have retrospective ef-fect from the stroke of midnight on I July, when the new order takes over.

The carrot is the likely offer to allow legislators who will be kicked out of office to hold a rally after the Chinese takeover during which they will address supporters from the balcony of the Legislative Council building.

Yesterday, Tung Chee-hwa. the chief executive-designate of the new special administrative region of Hong Kong, said that he hoped "nothing will spoil the happiness" of the handover

He insisted that demonstrations could be held, "as long as they are lawful, so long as they are quiet and peaceful, they will

However, a small storm is gathering over the new administration's intenuon to pass a new public order law in the ear-ly hours of 1 July which will have retrospective effect from the be-

ginning of the day.
The Provisional Legislature, which replaces the current elected legislature, is expected to rubber stamp the law at a meeting which will start around

3um.
The new legislative council has been meeting across the border in Shenzhen and has already agreed on the contents of the law, which imposes new requirements for police permission and outlaws demonstrations deemed to threaten Chinese national interests.

Elise Leung, the incoming Secretary for Justice, said over the weekend that "anyone who intended to make use of the few hours to act against the laws, it would be at my discretion to prosecute them

Although the discussion over the new laws only concerns a matter of timing it has agitated local lawyers because they see



Junk food: A ferryman approaching one of the glant floating restaurants in Hong Kong's Aberdeen Harbour. The harbour, on the south side of the island, offers shelter from typhoons and the traditional Chinese junks moored there are a major tourist attraction

it as undermining the pivotal principle of common law which is that legislation should not he retrospective.

The common law will still apply in Hong Kong after next

It now seems certain that a whole range of demonstrations

are being planned for both the day before and the day after the resumption of Chinese rule. One which may spark civil disobedience is to be held on the afternoon of 30 June where protesters will be targeting Chinese Premier Li Peng for his role in

They wish to demonstrate as close as possible to the hall where the handover ceremonies are being held, however most of this area will form part of a se-

On the day after the Chinese takeover there are further of handover events.

threats of civil disobedience be-

trally located open-air venues have been declared to be unavailable for protest activities.

There will be an unprece-dented mobilisation of the police force during the five days

extremely nervous about its leaders having to face demonstrators, so nervous in fact that it is now insisting that Britain allows more People's Liberation Army troops into the territory before the handover so that they can provide the necessary

they eschew all politics and

sensitive social and economic

made it quite clear that such self-censorship is not on the

agenda: "The autocracy in the

past was able to block what we

see and what we hear and rec-

tify our thoughts because they

monopolised the technology

for dissemination of informa-

tion. The computer network has changed this. It disseminates

technology onto the desks of each and everyone of us ...

hence it can undermine the two

pillars of an autocratic society

monopoly and suppression.

Tinnel's inaugural editorial

subjects.

#### British rule becomes only virtual reality

Teresa Poole Peking

And with a few strokes of the computer keyboard, the motherland vanquished the cvil British colonialists, and Hong

Kong was free.
This week, a new CD-Rom computer game goes on sale in China, inviting a generation of school-children to re-tight the 1840-42 Opium War – only this time it is possible for China to win. Yang Nanzheng, who during his former 23-year stint with the Papple's f iberation with the People's Liberation Army used to design computer simulation war games, said: "China has a one-third chance of winning in the game, because the Qing Dynasty was very weak at that time. The best outcome is that China does not cede Hong Kong to Britain, but it is difficult to achieve this result. And even if Hong Kong is not given away, China still re-

mains a very weak country.

Mr Yang, now games department manager at Gold Disc, a computer software company affiliated to the prestigious Oinghua University in Peking, said the new game would teach patriotism. "This is true to facts and can make children know about China's history and love the country." he explained, as he manoeuvred a couple of Chinese warships to sink a British vessel.

The corrupt and uncaring Oing Dynasty officials are presented as equal villains with the British in the CD-Rom. When the hero, a Mandarin scholar, goes in search of funds to fight the foreigner barbarians, he can try everything from flattery, beautiful girls, or the truth to win their support. But the Qing officials have a nasty tendency to repay him with a virtual beating or execution. Only if the player is skillful to raise enough money can the scholar then pur-chase warships and arm the Chinese generals. A series of five ion and lifestyle magazines have naval hattles must then be fought to decide the fate of thrived, but can exist hecause

Hong Kong. The Opium War CD-Rom took more than a year and 700,000 yuan (£53,000) to develop, and was scrutinised by the political commissars at the State Press and Publishing Bureau. Mr Yang estimated that 2.5 million Chinese home computers now have a CD-Rom drive, and that the new game "can sell very well because of the return of Hong Kong". The advertising promises that the game is: "Very vivid, beautiful pictures, intense music, inter-

esting plot."
Gold Disc's previous CD-Rom titles include Magic Eagle (Bloodshed in the suburbs), which is a fictional tale of Middle East peace-keeping troops, and historical war games featuring Bosnia, the Korean War, and Genghis Khan. The Opium War game, retailing at 78 yuan (£5.80), will have a much higher initial print-run than other products, with 20,000 copies due to hit the China and Hong Kong markets at the end of this

But the higgest threat to Mr Yang's warriors these days comes not from the British but from land-based Chinese pirates whose respect for intellectual property rights ranks lower than Britain's historic regard for Chinese sovereignty. "We are very worried, so we want to publish it as soon as possible and collect our money back," said-Mr Yang. "I am sure that pirated versions of the game will he out within one month."

#### There's no disguising problem toenails



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#### Internet challenge to great wall of media censorship

Teresa Poole and Jane Macartney

The latest challenge to China's strict media control comes from nobody. Nobody@usa.net, that is. This is the e-mail address which since 3 June has been sending out Tunnel. China's first electronic underground magazine which, according to its inaugural statement, aims "to hreak through the present lock on information and controls on expression".

According to Chinese ources, who understandably did not want to be named, the Chinese-language e-mad magazine is written and compiled in China, sent to the United States, and then distributed back to the Chinese network. The magazine urges readers to pass on editions to others, as-suring its readers that this would

mail users in China assume that the security apparatus routinely monitors messages, just as it does phone-calls. Most articles in the five issues

of Tunnel have been by USbased authors, suggesting that overseas Chinese dissidents may be involved in the project. Subjects covered so far by

Tunnel include the 1989 Trananmen Square crackdown, the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and a copy of the script of the US-made documentary film Gate of Heavenly Peace about the Tiananmen massacre.

Although opening an Internet account still means registering with the Public Security Bureau, China has generally embraced the information highway and is encouraging the spread of the technology across the country. Commercial In-

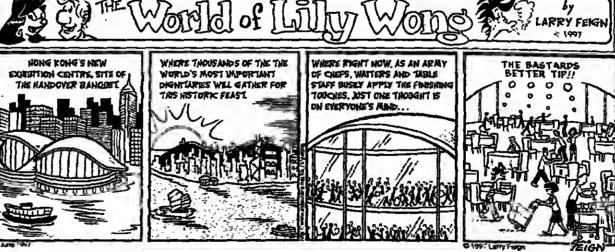
ened over the past two years, as there are now 150,000 users in the country's propaganda chiefs have orchestrated a "spiritual China, with the figure forecast to double by the end of this year. For a while, western media civilisation" campaign. Fash-

sites on the World Wide Weh, including CNN and various US newspapers, were blocked, but this was stopped by the end of last year. Most of the sites still put out of bounds by the Chinese cyber-police involve pornography and discussions of

human rights. Tinnel. however, is exactly the sort of product which the Chinese authorities do not want to see. Newspapers and television inside China are very strictly controlled and there are no underground publications like the samizduts which used to be passed around in the former So-

viet Union. Although the numher of newspapers and magazines has mushroomed during the Nineties, censor-

☐ Authors wishing to publish in not put them at risk from "rel-evant departments". In fact, e-able in May 1995 and officially considered political has tight-Tunnel should submit their works to tunnelig earthling.net. LARRY FEIGN WHERE RIGHT NOW, AS AN ARMY TOUCHES, JUST ONE THOUGHT IS N EVERYONE'S AND.



Why postpone

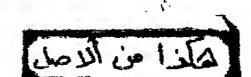
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#### General claims Pol Pot sighting in jungle camp

Matthew Chance Phom Penh

Po Pot is alive and in the cusloty of renegade guerrillas, a serior Cambodian army spokesman claimed last night, raising hopes that the reviled Khner Rouge leader may still facean international tribunal.

General Nhiek Bun Chhay. who has been negotiating the hancover of Pol Pot to government forces, said he had seen the reviled leader in person. beingheld under tight security at Anong Veng, the guerrillas remote jungle stronghold.
"Pol Pot is alive, I saw him

this morning," the general said. "He looked old and not very well," he added.

There has been no independent confirmation of the sighting and General Nhiek Bun Chhay was unable to offer any evidence, But if true, say Phnom Penh observers, this is one of the first reported encounters with the elusive despot for more than a decade, dispelling confusing reports over Pot Pot's health and whereabouts.

Cambodia's two vying prime ministers, who have pledged to stand Pol Pot before an international war crimes tribunal ooce he is handed over by renegade Khmer Rouge fighters who turned against him, issued conflicting statements yesterday.

Prince Norodom Ranariddh, the country's senior leader, said Pol Pot was being brought to Phnom Penh alive. However. his co-premier, Hun Sen, later contradicted the assertion, saying that he understood that Pol Pot was already dead.

The confusioo surrounding Pol Pot may be partly due to the remote location, in the thick jungles of Cambodia's north, where his loyal guerrillas were surrounded, and later captured, by 1,000 renegades, reportedly embittered by an internal purge of their movement.

But there is also growing coocern that Cambodia's most senior politicians have been engineering unconfirmed reports of events, in an attempt to rehabilitate hated Khmer Rouge leaders who want to reum to mainstream politics.

"Pressure on the governneot to produce Pol Pot, or evilence that he is alive or dead i growing by the day," said one dplomat. The whole world is watch-

ing for developments and if (ambodia's leaders can't come to with what they have pomised, they stand to lose penty of credibility."

## Greenland wants US warhead waste

**David Usborne** New York

The United States may soon have an unexpected solution to one of the most controversial conundrums created by the closing of the Cold War - where in park the warheads of the nuclear arsenals that for decades Washington and Moscow had pointed at one another's

Suddenly, Greenland is saying that it would not mind housing the weapons if to do so would help the cause of international detente. Given the gengraphical position of the world's largest island - midway between North America and Russia, the proposal seems per-

The offer has been made directly by Lars Emil Johansen, the Premier of Greenland. Mr Johansen teads the centre-left coalition that governs Greenland under its partial home-rule relationship with Denmark.

Greenland "doesn't want to be a dumping ground, but we would like to make our enninhution to the world peace." Mr Johanseo inid the Danish newspaper, Jyllands Pusten this week-

However, it is likely that Mr Johansen may have to smooth some ruffled feathers in Denmark first before the offer can be made formally to

Moscow and Washington. Denmark still has responsibility for Greenland's foreign and defence policy. The Danish Foreign Minister, Niels Helveg Petersen, was said this weekend to have been "very surprised" by

Ties between Denmark and its Arc-

end. Weapons from either side in the Cold War, America and the Soviet tense. Greenland, which has a populurion, would be welcome, he added. along its southern coastline, has made no secret of its loog-term desire to become a fully sovereign nation. It

> subsidies, however. Moreover, the proposal is likely to reawaken some sensitive memories in Denmark.

During the Cold War, Greenland secretly provided storage space for American nuclear warheads, even though Denmark had voted in 1957 to

ban all nuclear materials from its soil. When the secret was revealed, it turned out that very few even in the highest levels of Danish government had been aware of it.

The ootion of using Greenland as a garage for the warheads has surfaced remains heavily dependent on Danish in a report published in the US in February by the Rand Institute. The Institute this weekend welcomed Mr Johansen's offer.

"It is great news for the whole world that the Greenland Home Rule |government] is willing to make an initiative," a Rand spokesman said.



#### Tokyo court to decide on PoW claims Richard Lloyd Parry Tokyo British wartime prisoners of the Japanese will press their claims for enmpensation in Tokyo today, amid signs of fresh interest in their case by the

Arthur Titherington, British chairman of the Japanese Labour Camp Survivors Association, and Keith Martin, of British Civilian Internees, represent 40,000 former prisoners of war and civilian detainees who are each demanding US \$22,000 (£13,300) from the Japanese government for sufferings during their wartime incarceration.

At the Tokyo District Court today, Frits Kalshoven, Professor of International Law at Leideo University, will give expert evidence supporting their claims that former detainees are entitled to elaim individual compensation.

The Japanese government has never denied the claims of ill-treatment, including torture and sexual abuse, but maintains that wartime compensation issues were settled in the 1951 San Francisco Treaty, which exempted it from reparations across the board.

Under the Conservatives.

mistie that the new government will apply pressure on Tokyo to provide some kind of

They have already had a meeting with Derek Fatchett, minister of state at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. "He called us just a few days after taking office, and he said he would try to do as much as he could," said Martyn Day, lawyer for the plaintiffs.

"He asked for a grace period so that he could get no with things quietly behind the scenes, and we've been told that Robin Cook raised it vesterday with the Japanese foreign minister in Colorado. The sense I get is that we had a stalemate before, but that the Japanese are more likely to take notice of the new government."

Two years ago, the then Japanese prime minister. Tomiichi Murayama, launched a 100 billion ven (£500m) war atonement fund for education and welfare projects in countries whose citizens suffered Japanese mistreatment, but this gesture has been rejected by American and Commonwealth veterans' organisations, which demand individual compensa-

tion.
Emperor Akihito is coming over to Britain early next year. said Mr Day. vigour, is unlikely to turn every- tion, but lawyers acting for the til then, and if nothing happens plaintiffs are cautiously opti- we'll give him a hot reception."

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Focus on history: Spectators in Rome watching the Forum bathed in light from the newly installed illumination system Photograph: Vincenzo Pinto

#### Socialists pick a successor to Gonzalez

The Spanish Socialist Party yes terday rallied round Joaquin Almunia, the party's affable and experienced parliamentary spokesman, to succeed Felipe Gonzalez as general secretary. Mr Gonzalez convulsed the

party's congress in Madrid on Friday by unexpectedly saying that he would not stand again. However, Mr Gonzalez's example, intcoded to inject new

life into the leadership, was not followed by the powerful regional barons who insisted oo clinging to their seats. It was with their hlessing that Mr Almunia emerged as the suc-



Joaquin Almunia: Astute

Mr Almuoia, 49, a Basque from Bilbao who joined the par-ty in Madrid in 1974 and became adviser to the socialist General Worker's Union

(UGT), was elected to parlia- minimum. Trained in law and meot in 1979, when he joined the party executive. economics at Bilbao's Jesuit hands, who, although recognising the need to make

He became Minister of Labour and Social Security in Mr Gonzalez's first government in 1982. At 34, he was the youngest minister io that youthful government.

He has long combined positions in the party with those in public political life, and in the last year has been Mr Gonzalez's' effective and energetic right hand in parliameot.

Mr Almunia has carried the weight of leading the socialist opposition's fight against the conservative government of Jose Maria Aznar, since Mr Gonzalez has kept his own parliameotary appearances to a

Ecole des Hautes Etudes in changes to restore the party's Britain supported that posi-Paris, Mr Almunia is known for his intellectual astuteoess.

He is also a safe pair of thiog upside down.

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## French child porn raids lead to four suicides

**John Lichfield** Paris

Four suicides in five days have thrown into question the methods, and motives, of the French gendarmerie and judiciary which made simultaneous dawn raids on more than 600 suspected consumers of child

pornography last week. On Saturday, a teacher, Gilbert Pic, 40, threw himself to his death from the Aquitaine hridge over the Garonne in aux. He was the fourth paedophile suspect to take his life since the raids across France on Tuesday morning.

He and one of the others had been charged with the legally minor - hut professionally and socially devastating - crime of possession of videos portraying scenes of sex with children. A Photograph: Chris Hillock/Reuters Tulle, Corrèze, hung himself on

Thursday after child pornography cassettes were found at his home. He left a note saying: "I cannot go on. Forgive mc.

The other two men who killed themselves, including an invalid, had been questioned at length but charged with noth-Henri Leclerc, president of

the French league for Human Rights, said the suicides cast doubt on the deliberately dramatic and highly publicised raids. Not everyone who bought a pornographic cassette, even a child-porn cassette, was "another Marc Dutroux (the Belgian accused of a series of sexually-motivated child murders)", he said.

The Journal de Dîmanche. while applauding the crackdown on French paedophiles after years of "laxity", said yes-terday that a media circus and a rash of suicides was neither a just nor an effective way to protect children.

The judicial authorities pointed out, however, that the raids did not just lead to the arrest of consumers of child porn. Seven men arrested on Tuesday had been charged with taking part in, and filming, sexual acts with minors. The authorities also pointed out that many of the 235 men

They included 31 teachers, two holiday centre directors, two priests, and six doctors, one of whom was a paediatrician. The overwhelming profile is middle class," an investigator

charged had jobs which brought them into contact with children.

Most of those charged are accused of possessing child pornogrpahy and face prison terms of between one and three years, depending on the age of the children involved. The rails coincided with the start of the trial in Paris of the alleged ring-leaders of a network for filming and selling child pompg-

raphy, arrested last year.
The addresses of the nen raided on Tuesday came flom the files of this network, codenamed Toro Bravo, which old cassettes by mail at FF800 (£90)

The increased energy and re-sources devoted to child pernography in France flows drectly from public outrage generated by the Dutroux case in Belgium. Both French and Belgian investigators are working on links between Dutroix and

French child-pornographers.
The Journal de Dimanche revealed yesterday that two of the men involved in the Toro Bravo paedophile ring fad connections with the extreme right of French politics. One of the men, Bernard Alapetite. charged on Thursday, had several previous convictions for pedding child pornography. He is also an author of far-right tracts and books and a one-time associate of Jean-François Galvaire, a member of the political bureau of the National Front.

Mr Galvaire told the newspaper that he had had no recent connections with Mr Alapetite. Without challenging this assertion, Journal de Dîmanche pointed out that Mr Alapetite's video-production company, Platypus, had until recently shared an address with an FN front organisation chaired by Mr Galvaire.

"There are lots of companies there, even some freemasons [a particular hugbear of the NFJ," Mr Galvaire explained.

#### significant shorts

#### Don Fidel, Mexico's last revolutionary, dies at 97

He was as old as the century. Fidel Velazquez, who fought in Mexico's revolution and led the country's workers for the last 60 years, died at the weekend aged 97.

Revered by some and feared by others, Mr Velazquez. head of the powerful Mexican Workers' Confederation was seen as perhaps the last of the "dinosaurs" that formed part of Mexico's virtual one-party

system until the democratic opening of recent years. "He was a symbol of the hunger for power." said writer Carlos Monsivais. "Don Fidel knew how to reconcile the special interests of workers with the greater interests of the nation," said Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo.

Phil Davison Obituary, page 16

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#### Pope's plea for Christian unity

Pope John Paul II made a fresh plea for reconciliation among Christians yesterday. Patriarch Alexy II, who was to have met the Pope in Austria on Saturday, said last week that quarrels between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox faiths prevented the encounter from taking place. The patriarch linked any future meeting to overcoming the Russian church's concerns about Cathol efforts to win over believers. The meeting would have been the first such moment since the Great Schism of 1054 split the Christian faith into Orthodox and Catholi

#### Republic of Congo force urged

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (right) asked the Security Council on Saturday to authorize a multinational force for the Republic of the Congo to prevent a resurgence of fighting. Mr Annan said it was unclear whether the force would be UNled, such as those in Somalia and Bosnia, or simply UNauthorized, like the Italian-led

## operation in Albania. AP - United Nations

#### British visit reasserts Gulf links

Foreign Office minister Derek Fatchett started a tour of three Gulf Arab states to confirm London's commitment to security in the Gulf and boosting political and economic ties. Mr Fatchett, who arrived in Oman, is also due to visit the United Arab

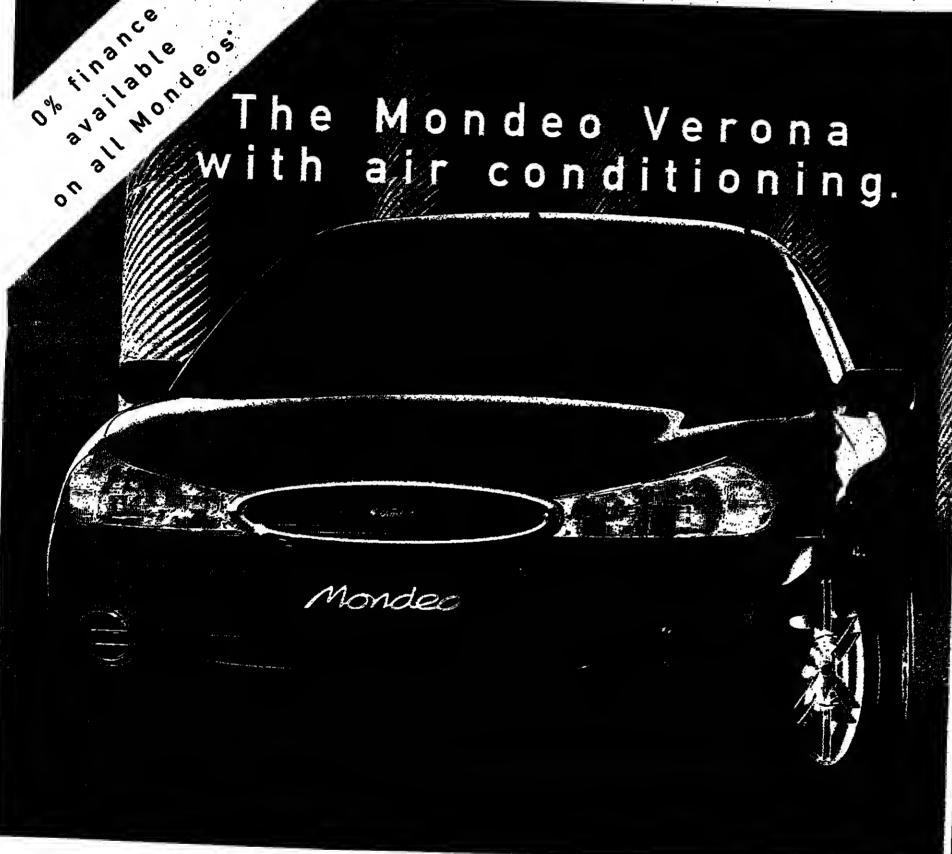
Britain keeps a number of warships in the Gulf part of a multi-national effort enforcing sanctions on Iran Reuters - Muscat

#### Pakistan-India talks progress

Pakistani and Indian negotiators started a crucial third and final day of talks. Top foreign ministry diplomats, each backed by a team of half a dozen colleagues, said on Saturday that they bad actieved "forward movement" on their second day of peace talks. Yesterday's talks aimed to produce an agreed document that would contain working papers from both sides and set out the mechanism for future talks between the arch-rivals. Reuters - Murree, Pakistan

Crocodiles win moral high-ground Crocodiles scaled the walls of Israeli justice, emerging

from the Supreme Court as winners in a case against their human captors. The court hanned crocodile wrestling at a reptile farm in northern Israel where the minute-long bouts between man and beast have been anattraction. Judges said it was immoral to cause the crocodile suffering for the sake of people's entertainment, a court official said. Reuters - Jerusalem



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# School for aristocrats gives youth gilt-edged future

Moscow - Margarita Sbemakhin extended a limp-looking hand, and fixed me with a gaze which hovered somewhere between pity and haughtiness. You must wait for a woman to offer you her band, she explained, as I planted a kiss on her freckled knuckles. Don't just snatch at it.

We were in her office, surrounded by pictures of Russian tsars and saints, where Mrs Sbemakhin - a middle-aged woman dressed in striking purple - was delivering an impromptu lesson on her favourite subject: the restoration of the etiquette and manners practised by the nobility of the pre-revolutionary era.

It is an issue in which she has a professional interest. She is director of a school in Moscow for children whose families claim to be of noble blood. They are among a small hut growing lohby which is trying to restore the values of a gilded past to post-Soviet Russia.

Some 50 children, aged between six and 13, have enrolled for a curriculum which includes lessons on how to walk (using the books-on-the-head routine), how to eat (with books under the armpits, to prevent elbow-flailing) and how to talk (no swearing; no grunts or loutishness on the telephone).

Whenever she runs up against a point of finesse which she cannot resolve, she turns to her supply of books. On her desk lie aging copies of How a Noble Russian Person Was Brought Up, and Life in High Society at Home and at The Court. Next year, she is contemplating

introducing classes in rhetoric. "People have such had hahits." she complains. "They tish knife and - nightmare of nightmares – they actually eat fruit with their hands.

Muscovites are anxious to establish social credentials. Phil **Reeves** reports

Her school opened as the Soviet Union fell apart six years ago. Though struggling for cash, it has built up a clientele among whom, she claims, nine out of 10 are from noble stock. This is a statistic of which she is proud to the point of snobbism. "I won't say they [the nobles] are mentally better than anyone else, but they are spiritually higher," she declares.

Her \$95(£58)-a-month estahlishment operates under the aegis of the Russian Noble Assembly, one of a plethora of or-

'People have such bad habits they actually eat fruit with their hands

ganisations that have grown up as Russians begin searching for roots which the Soviet system tried to deny. It is a world in which rivalries abound, not least because of disagreements over who is entitled to a title.

Nor is there any shortage of outright imposters. New Russians, anxious to establish high social credentials, have reportedly been paying up to \$0,000 to unscrupulous genealogists don't know how to hehave at a in return for a cooked-up. them to the former gentry.
The motives propelling Rusnoble families.

differ among individuals. At one end of the scale, there are Miss Lopukhin is one of a fervent monarchists, who begroup of people who are now relieve that the Romanov dylearning tradition - notably. nasty should be restored, but how to dance. Last weekend, disagree over who should be the several dozen decked themheir to Nicholas II, who was murdered with his family by the selves out in dinner jackets and evening gowns for a hall, or-Bolsheviks in 1918, At the othganised by a nobility association. It was in a small oak-paner end, are apolitical Russians,

who merely enjoy rummaging nelled room within a ninearound a history that was, for teenth-century mansion over-looking the Moscow River. For several hours, they danced to Earlier this year, the former French waltzes, polkas, and minuets played by a chamber orappeared to be on the verge of a success. There were reliable chestra, pausing only to drink cheap champagne and vodka reports - offically denied-that the Yeltsin administration was mulling over giving the Ro-manovs some kind of symbolic and eat chocolates.

Such events are held several status in the hope of creating a times a year, and Miss Lopufigurehead. For now, the idea khin enjoys them. Despite her appears to have been been heritage, she does not believe shelved, partly because of the in the restoration of the monaroutrage it would cause among chy, at least not in any serious the large rump of Communists, sense. They could, at a pinch, who are already furning over be "a symbol". But there would be no decision-making. But not everyone is driven by

Immaculate in a dinner jackthe passion of the monarchist et, clutching a pair of white gloves, Pyotr Kaznatcheyev, a a 20-year-old medical student from Moscow, resembles other 20-year-old philosophy student, was more adamant. "The return buffet; they know nothing of the rewritten family tree linking young Russians in all but one re- of the monarchy would be dangerous. We could never do that spect: she claims the title of princess, being a descendant of bere," he said. "There is already sians on their quest for history one of the best-known Russian too much state in our country.



Lost arts: A couple dancing and a young Russian aristocrat aiming a pistol at the annual ball in Barviha, near Boris Yeltsin's 'dacha'

Photograph; Yuri Kozyrev/FotoLoods

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#### Russian minister suspended over bath-house film scandal Phil Reeves Moscow tures are poor and could have been tampered with. Moreover, mixed banyas are common among Russians and the intense heat ensures that the banya bas an entirely asexual ambience.

Russia's Justice Minister, Valentin Kovalyov, was yesterday temporarily removed from office while an inquiry is held into a secretly shot videotape. which purports to show him with two naked women in a Mafia-

frequented banya (baths).
The decision, announced by the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, follows a request by the minister himself to be suspended in order to clear his name.

The scandal - a rival to the worst of British Tory sleaze - exploded into the public domain after the monthly tabloid news-paper Sovershenno Sekretno (Top Secret) published poorquality and grainy snaps taken from the video, parts of which were also hroadcast on Russian television. These show a silverhaired man in steam-shrouded baths with two large, apparent-ly naked, women; the video was



Steamy: The sauna evidence of ministerial sleaze

allegedly filmed in secret in September 1995, eight months after the 55-year-old minister was appointed to his post.

The minister has protested his innocence, and appears to helieve he is the victim of a sophisticated plot. "Everyone knows very well that modern

ble to put a person into any en-vironment or situation," be

decades, forbidden to them.

proposals to hury Lenin.

political lobby Maria Lopukhin,

grade. The black-and-white pic-

said, after being recalled suddenly from a trip to Sweden. The acquisition of kompromat
-compromising material - was
one of the enthusiasms of the old KGB. But by KGB standards, the evidence against Mr Kovalyov is by no means high

Whether the pictures are authentic or not, the affair is an

of stealing \$7m (£4.3m).

embarrassment for the Yeltsin administration, which is supposed to have embarked on a campaign to clean up corruption in high and low places. In ask-ing in he suspended from his job to fight the sleaze allegations, Mr Kovalyov said he wanted to preserve the reputation of the Russian government. But for many here, it is too late for that.

Perhaps the more damning

claim against Mr Kovalyov is that the nightclub sauna in which he was allegedly frolicking was a Mafia haunt. Sovershenno

Sekretno alleged that the videotape was taken from the safe in

the country home of a 35-year-old banker, Arkady Angelevich, arrested this year on suspicion

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'm crap at interviews." says Rupert Graves, cradling a half-empty glass of Stella and meeting my gaze with those famously fathomless brown eyes. "I'm just not very good at sentences," he adds, belpfully. It's an opening gambit that could easily have been uttered by Harold Guppy, the artless lodger he plays in the just-released *Intimate Relations* – a man whose liabil-ity to talk his way out of trouble results in his becoming mired in a painfully English kind of hell The closing scene of the movie shows Guippy star-ing blankly out from a hospital bed, watched over by a policeman, facing the prospect of trial (and the death-penalty) for the bloody marging of his landlady and her teenage daughter. A dramatised account of evidence given at a murder trial in 1956 by Albert Goozee, upon whom the character of Guppy is based, the film leaves us feeling that the young man is not only prime agent and chief vic-tim but also a strangely casual witness to at act of carnage rooted in illicit, three-way carnatelesire.

It's a part that Graves seems absurtly right for. There is his trademark little-boy-lost appearance (an appearance that seems unsullied by the decade that has passed since the handful of Merchant-Ivory dramas that first brought him to attention: A Room with a View, Maurice and A Handful of Dust). Those smoulderingly sheepish looks, so irresistible to women, have Julie Walters' prim and improper surrogate-mum Marjorie offering him much more than just lunch-box sandwiches to keep him going during his stay. There is his physical presence, too - that gamefor anything sporting agility that exposes the post-war suburban souls he lands up with after years at sea as the grotesque embodiments of their society's overly rigid moral order. Above all, though, there is Graves's intrinsic enigma. That blank-canvas quality which allows the film to rise above the status of mere dramatic reconstruction (who should we blame?) to become a blacklycomic portrait of clumsily articulated desire (who isn't to hlame?).

Like Guppy, Graves dares you to pin him down.
For ages, he pick 'n' mixes his way through a variety of accents, anything from a spoof of his native west Country (he's a Weston-Super-Mare man) to a broad American. "It's nerves," he msists. "I'm never sure whether I've made a mistake in the film by trying to make Guppy too nice," he says at ooe point but generally he keeps his comments about this passive yet impulsive character to a minimum. Talking about the sex scenes poses few problems however: "I always think that any scene which you don't have to speak in, like running across a field or shagging is a relief because you don't bave to coocentrate too hard."

For a long while, Graves's enigma went hand-inhand with his preparedness to expose himself in the bedroom. In the televised drama of the Steven Waldorf killings he acted the transvestite part, while in the EM Forster adpatation, Maurice, he snogged actor James Wilby, There was also the West End version of A Torch Song Trilogy where he played Antony Sher's boyfriend and the Martin Sherman play. A Mud House in Goa, where he had to simulate more naughty things with a man under a duvet.

For a loog time, he admits he enjoyed playing guessing games with journalists who enquired about his sexuality. The truth is beterosexual domestic bliss with mature student, Yvonne - and greybound, Roland - in Stoke Newington. As it bas been for 10 years. "I used to say it really was nobody's business. I could have said, 'No, I'm not' but I chose not to. I do have a worry that Al Pacino



## Nobody's fool

In 'Intimate Relations', Rupert Graves plays a man who can't talk his way out of trouble. To perfection. So how come he can still charm **Janie Lawrence**?

has. He says that if you do interviews and chat shows, you're asking the audieoce to suspend their belief in you as someone else. I like the idea of being anonymous. I talk to the old biddies in the park when I'm with Roland and I'm not recognised

There was perhaps a similar confusion about his class background when be first came to Loodon, after his professional debut at the King's Head. There were, apparently, assumptions that, with his public-school looks, he might even be related to the poet Robert Graves. Hardly. He had just fin-ished a stint wrapping chips in Weston's Taste of Fish, With only one O-level to his name, Graves basn't got good memories of his alma mater. Wyvern Comp. "It was all right for sleep. I didn't enjoy it very much because it was boring and I had glandular fever so I missed a lot. I was a dozy boy,

I'd like to have been like James Dean but I was more Arthur Askey - pathetically rebellious in a cheeky chappy sort of way."

By 16, he had made one appearance in the school production of A Twelfth Night and had sung his way through three gigs with his pop band, A New Lum-bago, at Weston Tech. 'I kind of always wanted to act but to get a grant I would have oeeded two Alevels and I was too far away from even O levels. I didn't know you could get a scholarship so I deter-mined early not to pursue that." So when the circus came to town, courtesy of the YTS, he joined up as a clown, Primarily, so he reckons now, because he had been in love with Juliet Griffiths since he was seven and ber mum "worked down the job centre". "I was employed mainly to put the tent up because there were very few able-bodied men. But I did learn juggliog and slack wire."

At only 22, he landed the role of Helena Bonham Carter's younger brother, Freddie, in A Room with a View. If the parties were a culture sbock, so too were the Loodon thesps. "I didn't have a clue what anybody was talking about. People were referring to writers - Theenesque and Chekhovian - and I thought, 'What are you talking about?' Chekhov - ob right, does that mean quieter?" Did anyooe ever take the mickey? "If they did I was probably too green to notice. Or it was too subtle for me

An early role in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore at the National is still etched in his memory as an evening of unmitigated borror. "I had to deliver this speech after I came down a tunnel and on the first night I forgot my lines entirely. I started sweating, remembered the first line and then just shrieked. I wanted to say to the audience, 'Come back In



Rupert Graves (left): 'I like the idea of being aronymous', and (above), the girl who goes crazy for him in 'intimate Relations', Laura Sadler's Joyce

about five years and I'll probably have got there.

I thought. This wouldn't have happened, Graves, if you'd gone to drama school.

He's now fully reconciled to missing out on drama school but reads furiously because he still

drama school but reads furiously because he still feels so "uneducated". Currently he's reached page 40 of War and Peace. "Even now when people say, Read this or that'. I think I've never heard of them." Does be let on? "Depends on the company. If I gauge them as sympathetic I will."

Success has oever beeo guaranteed despite, or perhaps because of that early exposure. Still, at the very least, he can make a living from his acting, not something that can be said of many actors. He claims he bas only recently been able to contemplate swapping receing for buying. Several years ago, finances were so dodgy that the bailiffs were making regular appearances on his doorstep. "It all caught up with me. I'd given some money to an accountant who scarpered and then I had a friend in Weston who was doing investments and I lost all that.'

Cash, though, does not motivate him, be says. I've done films for money like The Innocent Sleep and an Italian film which was shite and a film in Namibia which was shite. But although I get little flashes of panic, it's not enough to think I have to do hig, expensive movies."

Later this year, he co-stars with Vanessa Red-

grave in the screeo adaptation of the Virginia Woolf novel Mrs Dalloway and in November he'll be seen in Bent. He's writteo two short stories himself that he'd like to make into two films but is oot sure he'll ever get around to letting anyone read them.
"My grammar's crap – it's almost embarrassing

for me to read it, let alone anyone else." He knocks back another Stella. "I still feel like a Weston boy. I'm not very intellectually gifted and eveo now I can't say 'miles' properly."

But after four lagers, he does do the best

impersonation of a greyhound I've ever seen. 'Intimate Relations' is on general release

#### Prepare to be left goggle-eyed

mong those responsible for bring-Laduction of Wagner's Ring cycle to the Theatre Royal Norwich, there must have been a few first-night nerves as the house lights dimmed on Wednesday evening, for the sinister E flat bass pedal which begins Das Rheingold also heralded the start of the most ambitious project ever undertaken by that theatre. The tumultuous applause as the curtain came down some two and a half hours later must have seemed justification for their great initiative in bringing Mike-richiata's Odo production here as part of East Anglia's Year of Opera and

Musical Theatre.

If Rheingold is a foretaste of what is to come, then this is a production that is direct and accessible, allowing the story to unfold naturally without imposing itself too much on the music. Katherine Hysing's design is imaginative without being too elaborate, and with some inspirational touches, such as the gods descending from the sky in chariots. resplendent in 18th-century costume, like aristocrats belonging to what is a doorned ancien régime.

The singing was always well focused, the diction clear. Helmut Welker was a fine-voiced Alberich, if not quite a sufficiently menacing presence. Oddbjorn

#### opera Das Rheingold/ Die Walküre Theatre Royal, Norwich

Tenniford's rich bass made an eloquent Wotan, if not quite having the authority required of the third of the gods. Carsten Stabell and Gudjon Oskarsson as the giants produced some sensitive singing, and Rosemarie Lang promises a fine Fricka. Itiziar Marianez Galdos as a sweet-vector freia and there was excellent singing from the year sensions and lent singing from the very sensuous and provocative Rhinemaidens. Alfons Eberz sang well as Loge, even if he looked more pantomime figure than demi-god in his flamboyant red and black stripes, and there was an excellent Mime from Hans Jurgen Lazar. Cooductor Heinz Fricke paced the work beautifully; the balance was always perfect and lavish praise must go to the orchestra of the Norwegian Opera.

Saturday's Die Walkare re-enforced

the virtues of a production that allows

Wagner's music drama to proceed unention. If it bad maintained the same standard as Rheingold it would have been more than satisfactory: in the event, it proved even better.

Gudjon Oskarsson's dark bass and commanding stage presence projected all the menace of Hunding, and it was clear from the beginning that Jyrki Niskanen and Kjersti Ekeberg were a fine Sieg-mund and Sieglinde. Just how fine we learned as the learned that the sine we mund and Sieginde. Just how line we learned as the love duet unfolded, for here the music had an extra dimension, a truly implicational quality that held the audience spellbound, the release of tension spilling out in thunderous applause at the end of Act 1. A fine Sieglinde and

a truly exceptional Siegmund.

It was, literally, a hard act to follow.

Nevertheless, what did proved to be all of the same quality. Rosemarie Langwas an authoritative Fricka, Oddbjorn Tennfjord gave a sensitive performance as the tormented Wotan. His long monologue io the middle of the act, a potential source of musical loogueurs, was beautifully done; it proceeded naturally without any excess of stage "business". Carol Yahr was a youthful and attractive Brunnhilde. She and her fellow Valkyries wear uniforms of armoured

tops, short skirts and thigh-length boots.

Gudjon Oskarsson as Fafner, Alfons

Ebertz as Loge in 'Das Reingold'

The Ride takes place in a pine-clad landscape, and its treatment is an example of the flashes of humour that run through the production. The maidens gaily load corpses of dead heroes onto chariots which are hauled up into the sky. They have goggles, in case of snow blind-ness presumably: after all, the Ring sources are partly Nordic, and it gets pretty cold up there. Wed & Sat. Baoking: 01603 630000

on 0171 293 2222.

Frank Cliff

Ow can it be, marvelled Henry James, that the theatre characters in fiction can matter so much? Corneille's 1634 comedy The Royal upon the phenomenoo of an audience's investment of thought and emotion in fig-ments, though the way that it is framed brings an especially demanding inflection to our Manchester

awareness of the game that is being played. This adaptation by Tooy Kushner renders the play's action and point in an rounding shadow of Stephen Brimsoo Lewis's design. But the extra torque in immediately accessible version that oevertheless keeps entirely to the 17th-century milieu. Pridamant comes to the magus Alcandre in the hope of making contact with his son

Clindor whom he banished 10 years before. As Pridamant watches gluttonously", Alcandre is effortlessly able to animate the vicissitudes of Clindor's subsequent life. Alcandre is, of course, the theatrical creator, conjuring beings of flesh and blood out of the void - and the emptiness of the unimagined world, vitally but precariously peopled by the hrightly coloured, fluttering characters, is strongly evoked by the black disc and surThe Illusion Exchange,

Comeille's theatrical mechanism is that, as we watch a fiche is watching his own son -quite a different dimension of empathy. Trevor Baxter's portrayal travels between jovial, that's-my-boy delight, to silvery disapproval and, eventually, despair. It is a fine performance that shows us the stiff neck, the blindness and the awkward tenderness of paternity. It is an irony, too, that the patriarch is himself rendered nearly child-like by the mastery of Richard Moore's commanding Alcandre, who does

everything to illuminate, and

finally reassure him, except

effect an actual meeting

the comedy's most unsettling absence and one which points to its deeper questioning of the existence of reality.

between father and sou. This is-

play's door of perception. Clindor's adventures fall within the fictional stereotypes of the martial and the amatory. Here, Corneille seems to be satirising, especially in the poltroonish chevalier Matamore (Ian Bartholomew), the roles which will have serious import in Le Cid and his later tragedies. In both modes, the element of role-play is promioent. Yet Julia Sawalha as his (some of the time) beloved Isabelle. breathe eoergy and individual distinctioo into their parts.

Kusbner loads more. metaphor into his text than is Corneille's habit, but be pro-duces an entirely plausible and exceptionally vivid text that is given generous and intelligent voice throughout Matthew
Lloyd's excellent production.
As the "dogsbody" gently blows
out the lights, we depart reluctantly into our own illusions. To 5 July. Booking, 0161-833 9833

Jeffrey Wainwright

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he promise of a physical theatre company so physical that the performers are left black and hlue had an undeniably ghoulish charm about it. The reality, however, was sufficient to turn the voyeur inside all of us into a bit of a wimp. The performance began with a woman wearing a backless evening gown seated on a chair. A man entered and proceed to slap her back with the palm of his hand, very hard indeed. As he slapped, the skin reddened until the beginning of a hruise began to form (in truth, it was already there, courtesy, presumably, of the previous performances on the tour). He slapped some more until you felt that someone in the audience must say something, or at least walk out, but no-one did. There was no music, no lighting effects, nothing save an actress getting physically abused.

But what had begun as very poor, poor theatre soon became ever more Artaudian. fulfilling the company's stated brief of incorporating many disparate styles. Taped music (from Ryuichi Sakamoto) accompanied slow, balletic movements from a female chorus, while two television moni-

#### performance Tokyo **Ghetto** Arnolfini, Bristol

tors showed a montage of images including snatches of an anti-Japanese wartime propa-ganda film. A circular disc was lowered from the ceiling, on which the performers balanced precariously. There followed a kind of punk interlude, with a karaoke routine to Iggy Pop's "Raw Power", which was great.

The components of what turned out to be a fascioating speciacle were then added one by one until all the following was going on: an actress munching cabhage leaves and spitting them out on the floor, the female chorus reappearing dressed in Forties underwear with their heads veiled in surgical dressings; a guinea pig wriggling in a transparent container.

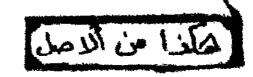
As the climax of the show

approached (after nearly an hour and a half's duration), an actress took the guinea pig from the jar and began to cud-die it. Ominously, another actress moved a lectern to the centre of the stage and began to slice up a page of A4 paper with a Stanley knife. Oh no, you thought, not the guinea pigl. The ending, however, was all surestress and links. sweetness and light. An epilogue showed a hooded demonstrator mime the throwing of a stone, while a Chinese guard looked oo. The guard then took the stone and threw it him self, before leaving the stage with the demonstrator, arm in arm. Tiananmen Square, right?

Asked for a post-match summary you'd have to say that it was intermittently superb, with images that were deeply strange and powerful, communicated through a chillingly disciplined lechnique. At other times, however, it seemed like nothing so much as a load of old toss, at least to the beery philistine that shares house-room with the voyeur inside us all. And whether it was worth anyone's sore back, or a psychologically scarred guinea pig, is debatable.

Phil Johnson

Tomorrow in the Tabinid: Tom Lubbock on Tatsuo Miyajima at the Hayward



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#### features

## Anyone for tennis? Or an eggy sandwich?

Interview



**Deborah Ross** talks to

ILIE NASTASE

t is 4pm at the exclusive Hurlingham Club in Fulbam, south-west London: teatime at one of those Senior Tennis Championships where companies pay £230 a bead to treat their clients to a good lunch followed by "a galaxy of legends"

- the bumf's description, not mine hitting a few balls about.

There has been no play today because the rain basn't let off for a minute. Ilie Nastase, the one-time glamour god who is now, perhaps, the greatest star in that galaxy, is in a petulant mood. He is bored, mostly. He takes it out on the sandwiches on offer. No. be doesn't want cucumber, as dainty as they are. Or smoked salmon, cheese or ham. He wants "eggy".

"I want English eggy. Eggy! Eggy! Beggy!" he keeps wailing. He is only cheered when he is summoned to the and excited, with a beautiful, lustrousbaired, caramel-skinned woman of, I would say, around 30 or so.

As far as I can gather, he first met this woman yesterday, at the Harbour Club. As far as I can gather, Ilie Nastase has an empty evening ahead of him at the Hilton Hotel which needs filling. As such, I am cruelly ejected from the chair next to him - tipped on to the floor, almost - in favour of this infinitely better, more attractive prospect. I consider feeling hurt, but then remind myself 1 have bags of personality:

Anyway, I sbift to another chair on the other side of the table. Surprisingly, llie doesn't seem to mind me spying so indiscreetly on him and his possible companion for the night. But then he has always loved playing to an audience. Whatever, I am privy to the conversation, which goes something like this: Πίε: "You like me? You think Γm

good-looking? Yes?"
Woman: "Well, it's what's inside a

person that counts." llie: "I look at a woman, look at her physically, and I know straight away if we going to be beautiful together or

Woman: "Oh." llie: "I like the tall women, with long bair and nice legs and nice hands, like you. We do dinner, OK? You want

champagne, yes?"
Woman: "What star sign are you? llie: "Cancer. And you are Leo. I know because Cancer and Leo very good together."

Woman: "l am Leo! l am! l am!" Nastuse howis triumphantly - "1 knew it! I knew it!" - then goes on to tell her a very dirty joke followed by several even dirtier ones. The words "horny" and "blowjob" in particular seem to figure largely. These are the sorts of jokes fathers always seem to tell after a certain age while you are going "no, dad, no" inside. The other players on the table - the Amritraj brothers, Manuel Orantes, Roscoe Tanner laugh until tears run down their leathery faces, and they must wipe them away with the backs of their gold-ringed haods or their glitteringly Rolexed

But the more I pretend to laugh "ho. ho." I go, I'm ashamed to say - the more saddened I feel in my heart. Don't get me wrong bere. I am not, on the whole, someone who tends to take the moral high ground. It's just that here, today, it all seems so depressingly arrested and sad. And you don't want Naslase to be depressingly arrested and sad. You want him to be dashing and dazzling and heroic. You want him to be, in person, like the tennis player he was in the Seventies, when the allround virtuusity and charisma of his game was just such a beguiling and wen-

drous thing.

He was, I think most would agree, one of the most beautiful and gifted players ever. (Later, Vijay Amritraj tells me "there has never been anyone to match Nastase for raw, God-given talent".) He could be argumentative and spoilt, to be sure, but unlike, say, Connors or McEnroe, who were American and brattish, he was darkly Romanian and the sporting public always adored him. The sheer magic of his play always saw to that, as did all his on-court tomfoolery - borrowing umbrellas from the crowd, kissing the bands of lady linesmen, that kind of thing. Of course. this could have been to do with putting off his opponent. And perhaps it was.

But it never seemed so. His entertainer's instinct, his larking about, may actually have done for bim in the end. In terms of the biggies, he only ever won the US and French Opens the once, which isn't much considering his supreme ability.



The Wimbledon singles title always evaded him. He was beaten in the finals twice, once by Stan Smith in an epic, five-set defcat - "Plcase, don't remind me of it" - then by Bjorn Borg. Ah, Bjorn. In the locker room, after, you can never tell if he win or lose. He take off his shirt, his pants, his socks in the same way and then always fold them in the same way."

Could Ilie compete against today's champions, if he were their age? "Of course." Is Tim Henman going to do it for us at last? "I think Tim good for England, but could be better."

Ultimately. Ilie Nastase proved one of the game's greatest under-achievers. But who cares? Mere statistics do not sum him up. For anyone who saw him, the memory lingers. This is a good thing, in most respects. It makes it hard to meet him, though.

llie: "So, we have dinner. I show you good time."

Woman: "I have an appointment tonight,

actually."

Ilie: "Tomorrow, then? I am 51 but I still look good, yes? I look at myself in the mirror in the morning and I say, Ilie, you still look good. Ah, the eggy sandwiches have come. I love the English eggy. We get intoxicated on this Eng-

lish eggy, yes? The thing about great tennis aces, as I am beginning to learn, is that it is perhaps unfair to expect them to he anything other than great tennis aces. Or even emotionally grown up. They begin their careers in earnest at what? Seven or eight? Then, for the next 20, perhaps 25 years, they go on to live a life disconnected from the real world and real people. It's all training sessions, planes, hotels, tournaments, cash prizes, the next training session, plane, tournament. They may end up owning several properties worldwide (Hie has six, neluding ones in New York, Miami, Paris, Monte Carlo), but never really belong anywhere. Marriages go pearshaped not just because they are never at home, but because they never really get to relate to anyone beyond their fans, the others on the circuit and the shag-happy groupies. They tend to be

shallow in this way. llic: "Where are you from?" Woman: "Sri Lanka." Ilie: "Ab, Sri Lanka. I never been

there, But I been to Ceylon. How far Sri Lanka from Ceylon? Vijay Amritraj: "They're the same

Ilie: "You think Vijay handsome? You think him nice?" Woman: "He seems very nice." llie: "Vijay, it not break my heart if

you leave now. Now, I tell you this very

good joke. This man, he want to have

the sex with his wife but the wife say ...

Nastase doesn't, financially, have to be here. He is a multi-millionaire - the winnings; property companies; shares in Romanian companies; deals with Adidas and Christian Dior; a business which exports Nastase bolognese to the United States.

He, much like the others here today, is still playing tennis because he can't stop playing tennis. Although not a great one for introspectioo or self-analysis, 1 think he says as much when he tells you what it was like when he realised he was no longer good enough to play at the ghest level. "I stop when I am ranked 50 or something, because I do not want to stop when I am 200. It is very difficult adjusting to regular life, because you have never had a regular life. When you wake up, you miss the pressure in your stomach. You miss the tension. You want to be always in front of people. Once you have been in front of people, there is no way you can furget it.

Last year, flie Nastase did try to break out. He stood in the election for **6** I miss the mayor of Bucharest, an act which surprised many putting on not only heeause he of the shorts hadn't returned to and the Bucharest for years, but also because he had never chasing of the been known to have a political thought io his life. Frankly, I think he little ball very much, yes 🤊 may still be a little suspect on this front. (Ilie, what did you make of Ceaus-

> things, yes, but he do a lut of very good things, too, and people forget this. He huilt wonderful huildings.")
> Failing to win was a disappointment, yes, but he's glad to be back doing this All Our Yesterdays husiness. "I miss the putting on of the shorts and the chasing

escu? "He do a lot of bad

of the little ball. I miss the atmosphere and the friendships very much, yes." llie's father, Georges, was a bank shier. The Nastase family, with five children, lived in one of the hank's houses, situated on the edge of a tennis club, also owned by the bank. They were better off than many other families in Bucharest, but still, money was scarce. Some weeks they only are bread with sugar. Hie used to go to school in

he only ever had the one shirt. Every day, at bam, he would get up to hall-boy for the early-morning tennis players, "I would get some money for this. But I would always have to give it to my mother." I wonder what it felt like when, later, all that prize money started rolling in? "It very nice. I invite everyone for dinner. I buy myself nice

a shirt still damp from the wash, because

curs. I like the Ferrari very much." His earliest memories are all in do with either playing tennis or kicking a soccer ball about. He could, he reckons, have been a great footballer, but opted eventually for the tennis because "it was not so hard on my legs". To cut a long story very short, he was Romania's child champion at 12 and junior champion at 15, left Romania pretty much for good at 17, and was number one in the world when computer rankings started in 1973. There was never any time fur puberty

but I still look good,

yes? I look at myself

morning and I say, Ilie,

Photograph: John Voos

in the mirror in the

you still look good

or adolescence or any of that stuff. which may go some way towards explaining why Ilie Nastase still seems such a childlike creature today. In some ways, this is endearing. He is open, eager to please, very much someone who lives in the moment. But in other ways, it's a handicap. He can't fill up his evenings with books or films because his attention span is so limited he can never get to the end of them. Our interview, if you can call it such, is a very stop-start affair, because mid-question he will sud-denly get up and wander off. He is much heavier and slower than he was, and lopes away like some hig old bear.

In fact, he is only truly interested or animated when talking about sex, which he does in a very pre-teenage way. He has loved women for ever, he says. When he was at school, even, he would put mirrors on the tips of his shoes so he could look up girls' skirts to see if they had knickers on or not. (I thank God I

am very much a trousers sort of woman.) How many women has he slept with. "I don't know. Too difficult to count. I think." He can concentrate on sex, then, at least? "Ha. Yes, I concentrate better on the sex than the tennis. I not first have sex until I was 19, 20, but then I catch up fast and become very good professional. The wumen always say to

me, oh baby, you good." His first marriage, to Dominique, a Parisian beauty, took place when he was 26. It collapsed for the reasons most tennis marriages collapse. "I travel, travel, travel, travel all the time. This is OK for one year, or two, but not fur 10. My daughter [Natalie, now 23] is a baby one day and then she is 14. 15 and I never see her grow up."

He is now married tu Alexandra, an American beauty, and has a further two children, Nicholas and Charlotte. 1 wonder why he married again. "I didn't want to. But I live with ber for two years and she wants to marry and her parents want her to marry.

If Nastase goes the whole way with the women he encounters on the road, I do not think he would see it as infidelity as such. It's just what you do when you are on these tours. He would not think of his life as sad or lonely or superficial because he's never lived any other way. Prohably, he's not even aware you can live life any other way.

Anyway, before I go I note the Sri Lankan woman has gone. To keep that appointment? Perhaps. But Ilie is not downhearted. A perky brunette in a tight, short-sleeved purple sweater is now stoing in that chair. When I interrupt to say goodbye, be gives me a big bear hug and a kiss, but then quickly gets hack down to business. "So, you like me". I tell you this good joke. Man goes to doctor because wife not giving it to him, if you know what I mean ...

There must be an absolute stampede for the gents' lavatory when Clinton responds to the call of nature

ing about Pres-Lident Clinton's trousers, and what lies therein. Maybe | read the wrong news papers but there seems to have been remarkably little speculation as to exactly what it was that made Paula Jones's eyes pop like that. But I've thought long and hard about

it, and it stands to reason that it must have been pretty spectacular. After all, she presumably only had a few seconds to stare at i before recoiling in horror, whereas I've had over 21 years to commit my spouse's tackle to memory and I'm honesily not sure I could give a blow. by-blow description in a court of law. But I thought Tony Blair acted like a seasoned diplomat the other day when he greeted Clinton in Washington, pointing up at something above their heads in exaggerated fashion. obviously to avoid the horrible possibility of bis gaze dropping below the belt. Blair is in a privileged position when you think about it - who needs to be a fly on the wall when you can do some presideotial bonding over the urinals? There must be an absolute stampede for the gents'

Wiping crumbs, genitalia and other preoccupation's (sic)" was the topical title of a painting in the final degree show at Brighton Polytechnic. Bereft of babysitters, we bad to take all four children with us to the private view on Friday night; you would think they would welcome the opportunity for some latenight carousing, but the word "art" or "gallery" is guaranteed to bring mine out

lavatory when Clinton responds to the call of nature.

in terminal sulk mode. They have seen naked men in glass cases at the Hayward, a wall of willies at the Serpentine and still they insist that art is boring. But then perbaps we bave been too liberal - my childhood exposure to art was. after all, limited to furtive searches for bare bottoms in a book of Ingres. The girls, in celebration of the Turner shortlist, were more appreciative than the boys they frolicked in a latex padded room cell like true performance artists. But my 13-year-old insisted on bumiliating us by doing a

William Hague - declaiming in oratorical young fogey tones that painting a yellow rectangle on the wall was not art, thus giving our arty Brightonian friends - whose teenage children do them credit by piercing their belly buttons and running away from home - the perfect opportunity to sneer at us for deserting state education at secondary level.

It's particularly oauseating to hear the Conservative party milking William Hague's



Dinah Hall

eredentials as a comprehensive school boy, as if he were some sort of war hero, triumphing against enormous odds. Apart from the fact that it is patronising 40 per cent of the school population, it is also deceitful (a Conservative trait evidently not restricted to Old Etonians): if it was a grammar school when he started

there, it hardly gives him the right to claim he opted for a comprehensive education. But still, fudging over the issue of where you send your children to school is a middle class prerogative. I'm guilty of it myself - the admission that my oldest goes private is always followed by disclaimers - that it's an old grammar school. that most of its intake comes from the state sector, that it is described as "not for social elimbers" in the Good Schools Guide, Meanwhile, friends who send their children to comprehensives in leafy suhurban areas [ 'leafy" is a standard educational cuphemism for "middle class"I are honour bound to exaggerate street cred factors: when they mentioo "knives in school", it's actually canteen cutlery they're talking about.

Sports day was a disappointment this year: I had hoped to witness first-band some of the parental competitiveness I have heard about from friends (my favourite is of a mother seen castigating her child after the 200 metres – "Second is not good enough"). My son had implored me not to go and I had rather excitedly assumed that this was because he thought I would shame him by turning up in an outrageous, radical chie outfit. But it turned out the reason be didn't want me to go was because he wasn't going either, attendance was optional unless you were a sporting hero. Consequently I had to stand there in the pouring raio with the four other parents who had turned up, staring fixedly into the middle distance, pretending that one of the musely liole brutes was mine. This completes a lifetime of sporting humiliation which began for me at the age of four, when I stopped short of the finishing tape because I thought you had to jump over it, and continued with a vounger sister who won the Victrix Ludorum at every sports day, while my best result was a fourth equal in a sack race with five contestants.

Those bastards at BSkyB are really turning the screws now: they've bought the next series of Friends and ER. But dammit, we're not giving in. If the pitiful sight of the boys watching England football matches on Ceefax hasn't weakened our resistance, it would be too shameful if I capitulated over middle-age lust for George Clooney.

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## Yes, smoking kills, but litigation is ruinous

just agreed to hand over £220bo, enough to keep our National Health Service going for five years. It is an astonishing sum of money. The amount earned by lawyers working on a percentage boggles the mind. But then, the tobacco industry has done wrong. It concealed information about the link with cancer and the addictiveness of nicotine. So should it not pay? And, if the answer is yes, then the next question is, should British tobacco companies not pay here?

No sooner had the monster American settlement been reached than a health authority spokesman was on our television screens saying they intended to look at whether such an action could be taken to the courts here. Yesterday, the doctors' trade union, the British Medical Association, urged them on. Well, hold On a minute. This is a case not so much of running hefore they can walk but of trying to fly. It would be extraordinary, and a dramatic change to our legal sys-tem, if health-care providers in this country could sue tobacco companies for the cost of treating their customers.

There is a case already, due to go to the High Court next week, in which a group of cancer sufferers is suing Gallaher and Imperial Tobacco. It is already pushing at the boundaries of British legal practice: it is the first case brought by a group of litigants - a fore-taste perhaps of the "class" actions

he American tobacco industry has which so dominate the American system - and they have to prove that the companies showed negligence in failing to cut tar levels in their cigarettes when they knew this would reduce the number of cancer cases. Given that these cases concern people who knew cigarettes caused cancer and yet chose to smoke, that is a tough charge to make stick.

What is unthinkable is that English or Scottish courts should hold that the tobacco companies owe a duty of care at one further remove, not just to their consumers but to the health-care providers who have to treat them when they start coughing up blood. Certainly, the makers of cigarettes have wider ohligations than simply to their customers, as do the makers of fast cars, motorbikes and everything else. But these are not ohligations which should be enforced by individuals through the legal system. That is what we have polities for. Of course there is a public interest in minimising lung cancer and road accidents. That is why we have laws to discourage smoking and make the roads

The problem in America is that individuals have to pay for their own health care. And here was a clear case of manufacturers concealing information about the safety of a product. In fact, the American settlement is limited to the period when the tobacco companies knew things that the rest of us did not. They suppressed findings on the link to can-



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impact of cigarettes on health. For that, they should pay. By all means let us punish British companies if they have behaved as badly as their American cousins. The principle of reparation is right. It is the scale of the US settlement that seems strange. It is disproportionate to the culpability of the tobacco giants – wicked, greedy and, well, capi-talist as they might have been. After all, we are talking about cigarettes. You do not need a laboratory full of corgis dosed up until half of them die to know that smoking is not particularly good for you. You do not need to read research papers

cer and consistently lied about the to know that it makes you cough. You do not need a PhD in pharmacology to know it is addictive.

Now we know about cancer, it is up to the individual to choose whether to smoke or not (although the tobacco companies might want to contribute to schemes focused on the causes of smoking among young women). But it should also fall to smokers to pay the cost of treating smoking-related illnesses. In America, they now will. Here, they already do.

Yes, that's right. And no, we have not suddenly swallowed the tobacco industry's propaganda. In Britain, four-

fifths of the price of cigarettes goes in tax. In America, the average is around onethird. In this country, the £10bn annual revenue from tobacco taxes easily covers the cost to the health service of treating tobacco-related illnesses, which is usually put at under £1hn a year.

We are not prejudiced against the United States in proclaiming the superiority of the British way. We are only prejudiced against lawyers. It is a paradox that the Land of Free is actually a land chained by excessive legislation, litigation and pettyfogging nannydom. As Charles Arthur wrote in our pages last week, you almost expect paving stones there to be marked: "Danger: falling on this sidewalk can cause injury." It has become fashionable - not least in the Labour Government - to complain about excessive bureaucracy in the NHS. This is nothing compared with the vast, rickety network of pen-pushing, formfilling insurance companies, doctors and lawyers which "manages" health care in the US. This consumes a much larger proportion of America's much larger income than the NHS does in Britain, and yet it still fails to provide cover for some 35 million American citizens. These have to fall back, if they become ill, on the publicly-funded safety-net ser-vice known as Medicaid, and it was these Medicaid programmes which were at the centre of both the litigation against and the settlement with the tobacco industry. In a sense, the American legal sys-

tem was ensuring a measure of social justice that we have secured in this country through our political system. The US tobacco companies will now have to put up the price of cigarettes by about 50 cents a packet in order to pay for some of the health-care costs of the less-welloff. The combination of tobacco taxes and an NHS free at the point of need achieves all this and more in Britain at a fraction of the cost in lawyers' fees.

What But

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#### Yesterday's man and boy

We try, we try. But it is impossible not to be fascinated by the Conservative Party, a rump of 164 madmen whose recent power now seems so insubstantial. Cecil Parkinson as the driving force of party modernisation? Peter Lilley, the man who gave Labour the propaganda gift of abolishing the state pension, in charge of the policy review? Norman Fowler hack, again, from spending time with his family? Brian Mawhinney as shadow Home Secretary? But above all, the appointment which confirms the Young Hague's genius for the popular touch: the idea that the people of this country would like nothing more than to be represented abroad by Michael Howard.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -

#### High price of Millennium **Exhibition**

Sir: You report that the Millennium Exhibition is to go ahead - with an entry charge of £20 per person ("Blair to rescue of Millennium project", 20 June). This charge seems to be high, how does it compare with other top attractions nationwide? Surely the displays at the dome will have to he very attractive to deserve this price, particularly for visitors outside the south east. Even as a headline figure it says something about the sort of people this event is really Should the event fail to attract

sponsorship and/or visitors it could cost the taxpayer a great deal - and even see out the Blair administration at the next election.

It could already be compared with Mitterrand's "Grand Projet" in Paris - not least in its overall WILLIAM HIRD

Sir: I sincerely hope that the Greenwich Dome is not Tony Blair's first mistake. The British Pavilion at the World Fair in Seville was designed and huilt without a thought to its function but was proclaimed as great architecture. even though it was completely useless as a showcase for British

For goodness sake, let the Millennium team define the precise function of this new structure before it is built. The last thing we need is a massive and permanent exhibition space whose very design and construction contradicts its purpose and costs millions over the years to sustain. GILES VELARDE Museum and Heritage Design Pett level, East Sussex

Sir: So Britain is to build a throwaway PVC-coated dome. Not only will it result in the production of dioxins but huge amounts of carbon dioxide as millions of visitors trek across the planet to wonder at the spectacle.

A fitting epitaph it may be to this wasteful and polluting century but a more dismal celebration of the new millennium is hard to

Why not a ten acre wood planted by and for the citizens of every parish on land purchased with millennium money to create a natural theme park in everyone's back yard?

Or a similar parish area devoted to experiments in self-sufficient low impact housing? Or use the money to write off a slice of third world debt and give us something really to celebrate? MARTIN HUGHES-JONES For Mid Devon Green Party

Tiverton, Devon

Sir. The Prime Minister's boldness in giving the green light to the Greenwich Millennium site is to be respected and admired. The Great Exhibition and the Festival of Britain were much reviled before the event and equally admired in retrospect. The afterglow can only be enjoyed if the event actually takes place.

Even today Parisians regret the cancellation of the 1989 Paris Bicentenary Exposition - a true victim of gesture politics - as the "one that got away".
GEOFF KERSHAW Rickmansworth, Hernfordshire



#### **Settling NHS** negligence claims

Sir: Professor Harris ("Patients" damages can wait, says professor". 20 June) addresses only part of the problems of malpractice litigation on the economics of the health service since he considers only successful claims. He does not consider unsuccessful claims.

Most medical negligence claims are legally aided and are unsuccessful. The Legal Aid Board generally relies on the advice of the plaintiff's legal advisers in deciding whether or not to fund an action. This advice is not independent. It is not uncommon for such claims to be unsuitable or misconceived. A health authority, however blameless, is not able to recover its legal costs. It may even find itself under pressure to settle claims regardless of the merits on the grounds of commercial expediency.

so called legal aid "blackmail". The combined effect of the costs rule and poor decisions by the Board is to impoverish the health service such that funds are diverted from patient care to lawyers' fees. Only a surprisingly modest proportion is

paid out as compensation. There is no reason why the Board should not be required to reimburse health authorities the costs of defending hopeless claims. Dr ANTHONY BARTON London, N1

Sir: Professor Harris identifies a very important issue. He quite rightly questions whether priority should be given to immediate payment of successful medical negligence claims against NHS trusts, to the detriment of the NHS budget for patient care.

Given the huge amounts of money involved annually in paying out in successful cases, in defending allegations that eventually come to nothing, added together with the money expended by the legal aid board in funding ill-founded actions in medical negligence, surely it is time that ministers thought again about a separately funded "no fault" compensation scheme? Could it be so much more costly? BARBARA DEVEREAUX Swanscombe, Kent

#### Consultants are hard at work too

Sir: You report a study in this week's British Medical Journal which shows that surgeons in training often perform complex procedures for the first time without supervision ("Trainee surgeons perform operations

alone", 20 June). These are clearly not ideal training conditions. They arise because of the relentless drive to reduce waiting lists and increase patient throughput. Each year hospitals are expected to take on three per cent more work with the same resources and this can only be achieved by having all the medical staff, senior and junior, working flat out.

Of course it would be much more satisfactory to have trainee and consultant in the same operating theatre but that would inevitably mean that waiting lists

would soar and hospitals would go bankrupt. The BMA has never supported the internal marker, this is one of its worrying effects. The "absent" consultant is not pursuing private practice as John Spiers. chairman of the Patients' Association alleges, but in the adjacent operating theatre working through another list. NOSNHOLN L Chairman Central Consultants and

Specialists Committee British Medical Association London WC1

#### City children delight in wildlife

Sir: Martha Maher (Letters, 21 June) is very much mistaken in her assumption that city born children never."see or deal with real

In our central Hull garden. children experience the reality of nature - its beauty and its brutality. It's hard to explain to them why some animals kill without need but. at least in the city, we do not have lo explain why our friends and neighbours find "joy" in witnessing the agony of death.

Hearing my granddaughter's squeals of delight at her first encounter with squirrels or watching my daughter's successful vigil over two haby thrushes learning to fly before the cats get them, this is real joy Ms Maher. ANGIE SMITH

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056;

e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

#### Radioactivity at Homemade Three Mile Island

Sir: Grant Hole (Letters, 18 June) is both right and wrong. He is correct in saying that radioactive xenon and krypton entered the environment following the Three Mile Island accident, but wrong in implying that the releases were

To say that xenon and krypton are released from nuclear power installations is a truism - it is the amount that matters. One US expert, reporting to a conference in Germany, stated that he received a larger dose on his flight than if he had sat on the site fence throughout the accident.

The Three Mile Island accident was thoroughly examined by the US regulatory authorities including the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the health authorities of the State of Pennsylvania; they concluded that there were no significant public health effects due to the radiological releases.

It is important to note that all of these reports are subject to the Freedom of Information legislation and are a matter of public record.

It is therefore misleading to put Three Mile Island in the same class IVOR ROWLANDS

or context as Chernobyl (or Windscale, itself small compared with Chernobyl) in terms of damage to public health and the environment.

Addictive policy Sir: Rather than increasing "social

miscry". Dutch policy has greatly reduced the damage done by drugs (19 June). This was accomplished hy "harm reduction" instead of police, courts and prisons.

electricity

an effort to support the

renewable sources.

Sir: I am interested that electricity

companies will allow me to pay 10 per cent extra for my electricity in

development of electricity from

I have a better idea. I want to

install solar panels for electricity

production on the house I am

miserable weather conditions.

However, I wish to export excess

electricity to the grid when the sun

shines in my direction. All it takes

The technology exists. It is not

electricity company tells me I can

it) and now proposes I pay them

available to the average consumer

production without extra land use.

the roof-owners of Britain can

contribute to clean electricity

ANI HARRIS

High Peak, Derbyshire

install low-energy light bulbs (done

incommon practice in many

European countries. So far my

about to build. I want to use

electricity from the grid in

is two-way metering.

The addiction rate in the UK is 163 per cent that of Holland. The UK is addicted to a failed policy that can never succeed. RANCEFORD GIVENS San Francisco, California

#### Lonely and lost in Australia

Sir: In Australia there has been much discussion on the recently released Report of the Australian
Human Rights and Equal
Opportunity Commission Inquiry into past policies of Australian (Federal) and State Governments in the removal of Aboriginal children from their families and, who are known as the "Stolen Generation". Sadly, the nation is divided over the report's findings and recommendations.

May I, as a member of the so called "lost children of the Empire" (British child migrants) draw to your attention that we were removed from our families in the UK by successive British governments and "shipped" out to Australia and other parts of the then Empire. (pre and post war). without their consent or knowledge and placed in orphanages. I left Nazareth House with the nuns singing: "Will ye no come back again?"

It is time that the British and the Australian government formally inquired into the legality of the 'Child Migrant Scheme", the violation and abuse of our human rights and the wrongs done to us as children and, now as adults. We have been emotionally and physically scarred by our experiences in being removed from our families and, in the tyranny of distance and expense of going "home" to the UK to try and find our families.

We child migrants don't have any powerful people speaking out for us other than the lone voice of the Child Migrant Trust (Nottingham, UK). We had no one to turn to for help. We had always been told we were "orphans".

We seek justice for our loss of family by being removed from them, being robbed of our ... childhood, the loneliness of it all and not knowing who we are, in being sent across the seas to what to us was a strange and foreign land away from our families and homeland.

GEOFFREY M P GRAY (Former Child Migrant & British Citizen) Mount Lawley, Australia

Sir: Your report on the visit to Britain of John Howard, the Australian Prime Minister (18 June) referred to "the British monarch as head of state in Australia. In fact the Queen of Australia is the formal head of state and the Governor-General is the effective head of state.

The British monarch has no constitutional role in Australia and the Queen of Australia has only one constitutional power: the appointment of the Governor-General, which power is exercised on the advice of her Australian When two-way metering becomes ministers. The implication of your report that there may be some vestigial lack of independence from Britain is a frequently

encountered misconception. A republic will eventuate only if a majority of people in a majority of the six states agree at a referendum. It has been notoriously difficult to have radical constitutional proposals accepted by the. Australian people, despite the support of opinion polls. Robert Menzies' proposal to outlaw the Communist Party was given 80 per cent approval by opinion polls but failed owing to the common sense of the Australian people. MATTHEW WHITE Chairman, Australians for Constinutional Monarchy (UK branch) Meldreth, Cambridgeshire

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#### What the Butler saw - ordid he?

Sir Robin Butler's role in the Aitken affair should make Labour rethink Whitehall's top job, says David Walker

mong those to whom Jonathan Aitken lied and lied again was Sir Robin Butler, Whitehall's bead prefect.

Thank goodness there are some gents left. Sir Robin (Harrow and University College) is a toff. Isn't it to his credit that, chap to chap, the Cabinet Secretary should have believed Aitken,

another toff (Eton and Christ Church)?
Alternatively, Sir Robin's role in the
Aitken affair is elinching evidence that,
at the very beart of the British state. most nights it's amateur bour. If the Cabinet Secretary, the impresario of Britain's still vast intelligence-gathering networks - the man who sees the communications intercepts, who knows just which members of British legations in Paris and Geneva let alone Abu Dhabi and Riyadh are spies - couldn't have the Aitken story donble-ebecked, then those ornate and expensive Thameside palaces occupied by MI5 and MI6 might as well be flogged off tomorrow.

Are we seriously to believe that Sir Robin did not have the wit or the capacity to ask Stella Rimington of the Security Service - on old girl terms you understand - about Jonathan Aitken's business dealings at home and abroad? It's not, despite Aitken, a matter of corruption. After II years under Thatcher and Major, Sir Robin's moral antennae do seem somewhat underused. Yet the Cabinet Secretary's office remains a sleaze-free zone in the conventional senses of money and sex. And don't imagine that there aren't opportunities: even bureaucratie power can be an aphrodisiac.

The question is one of competence. Of course Sir Robin ensures Cabinet papers are printed and that the committees function - look how smoothly be machine has handled the transition to Labour. It's to do with the nature of his job. The truth is no one ever knows just how well or badly Whiteball's top inction decause no one except Sir Robin and cronies privately ever asks. As for Sir Robin, questions about how well be does are out of the question since no official job description exists for the role, let alone performance reviews. The new Labour government, bowever, has a once-in-a-lifetime chance to change all that. Sir Robin is due to retire at the end of December. This gives Tony Blair the opportunity to stop and think about just what it needs at the centre of the centre.

Sir Robin doubles up as bead of the civil service. So be is also notional manager of the Whitehall machine and ethical arbitrator for conscious-stricken colleagues. Is be qualified? He bas - this

#### Those ornate palaces occupied by MI5 and MI6 might just as well be flogged off?

from his close colleagues - few skills as a personnel manager; the senior civil service is largely unmanaged.

Among his myriad jobs, Peter Mandelson is supposed to be contributing to Blair's thinking about the machine - as well he might, since Mandelson's own role is vitiated by the lack of clarity between the respective roles of professional government business manager and bead of the machine. But will Mandelson even ask the right ques-tions? So far no attempt has been made to bring in outsiders or look overseas; experienced civil servants outside the loop have not been consulted.

The case for splitting Sir Robin's job is strong. Civil servants at the centre desperately need managing, motivating and modernising - and if in these straitened circumstances that task needs combining with the permanent secretaryship of one of the mainstream departments, nobody I've talked to in Whitehall sees the least difficulty with making that arrangement work.

Because Whiteball is such a cosy place, some say there is no point in even pretending there are "objective" answers to how Cabinet decisions should be reported and progress chased through the machine. No, it's all a matter of the tiny group of personalities "in the frame" - the kind of people deemed to have the right kind of Whitehall background. Thus Sir Robin's replacement is just a matter of choosing, to name the obvious official candidates, hetween the top men at the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence and Environment, Transport and the Regions.

It should not be this way. Sir Robin bas been fighting hard to ensure that he is replaced in his joint role - so Buggins will get his turn. Labour may not care about openness - or even efficiency and effectiveness - in the central machinery of the state. But it surely cares for its own skin. Its success - its capacity to distinguish itself from its sleazy predecessor - surely depends on rejecting Sir Robin Butler's advice.



## Can Labour finally get the CSA to work?

#### by Polly Toynbee

find, flamboyantly exposed, just what the Government is up against in trying to break the fathers' conspiracy to defraud the CSA. The website headline proudly says: "Colluding to Defraud the State". No holds barred, it tells fathers how to cheat. It suggests fathers write semi-literate letters: "people are more likely to succeed if they come over as not very bright". It explains how the. threat of violence to their ex accepted as a reason for the CSA to withdraw. Showing CSA officials evidence of damage done to a house by an ex-partner (such as broken windows) will usually have "an instant effect".

They know the CSA's weak points. "The CSA does not have the ability to investigate the evidence you give them." They know officials work to targets based on cases cleared rather than success in delivering money to mothers. "Every case closed is another goal reached. Provided they feel the story they are hearing fits within their terms of reference (whether they believe it or not) they are likely to close the case and move on to the next."

Fathers are part of the new government's CSA legacy from the Tories. Currently, over a third of absent fathers fail to pay anything at all. Half of those assessed are in arrears and less than a third com-

But will Labour do any better? On Friday, Social Security Secretary Harriet Harman announced her determination to break the fathers' resistance. First she set new CSA targets, will an extra 500,000 assessments to be completed by the end of the year.

"Completed assessments" may look good on paper but what matters is how much money is collected and transferred to lone mothers - not much so far. To remedy this she also announced a wide-

ranging review.

The principle is crystal clear. Parents should be made to pay for their children. But that principle is undermined week after week by stories that beggar belief, leaving the CSA confronting human life at its most hizarre.

Take this terrible example only a couple of weeks ago. A 16-year-old schoolgirl ran off and set up borne with her stepfather. Her poor mother was durined by the CSA for maintenance of her daughter for £177 a month. Outraged, she refuses to pay. But. according to CSA policy, she must. "The agency has no discretion in this area," said a CSA spokesman. Fathers often compluin that their wives left them, so why should they pay? But pay they must.

they will at least be English. The

a threatened minority. In 1996 only half the strawherries

consumed here were home-grown.

The amount of land given over to strawberry cultivation is in decline. On

the past decade's trends it will not be

long before watery foreign imports

outnumber the indigenous. In fact,

home-grown varieties of strawberry

were replaced lnng ago: three-

quarters of all the strawberries sold

here are now the single type known

as the Eisanta, developed in Holland

fruit: bright appearance, long shelf-life

and glossy, firm skin. It can be trans-

ported long distances without hruis-

ing. Its huge berry makes it quick and

cheap to pick. It also has a number of

drawbacks. Time for a jeremind on the

dynamics of modern consumerism.

the supermarkets in their strategy of

centralised warehousing systems

First, this kind of fruit encourages

Elsanta is the supermarket dream

15 years ago.

Take the most of the straw- are grown locally, they must travel

But more than that, the majority of

of Spain which means a 1,000-mile

journey by lorry, adding further to

road traffic, the lastest-growing source

of the main greenhouse gas, carbon

This is not to mention the herries

which arrive from Kenya, Zimbabwe,

Australia and even, across 13,000

miles, from New Zealand - air trans-

port using 37 times more fuel than

and leaf disease, most growers have

abandaned techniques like inte-

grated pest management or crop

rotation and resorted to the use of

greatly increases the rate at which the

ozone layer is destroyed. Firms such

carriage by road.

berries at Wimbledon this miles to a regional warehouse and then back to the supermarket. Trips

native strawberry is about to become our strawbs now come from the south

pence each - as they did last year - of 100 miles are not uncommon.

the Network Against the Child Support Agency has a website\*. Point your browsers towards it and there you will account would destroy the whole concept that parents are paying for life for children, come what may. ents are paying for life for children, come what may. Hard, but necessary. Winning public support for this principle has been difficult. Yet if individual discretion were allowed then we would return to the far worse court system where most fathers escaped

paying anything like their due.

How about this recent story: "A father was convicted of manslaughter at the Old Bailey on the nance" - ie for the ex-wife berself - on the grounds grounds of provocation, for killing his former wife's - that the children need someone to look after them new husband. The jury heard John Reid stabbed the who herself needs looking after, but since this outman, William Pigg. 10 times on his doorstep, screaming, 'Die, you bastard, die.' "It happened on the day he opened his pay packet and found the CSA had taken £206 from his £560 pay. But it defies understanding bow on earth that jury thought a CSA

 Public opinion is rarely on the CSA's side. The "poor fathers" campaign has been one of the most brilliantly mendacious ever 9

bill was sufficient "provocation" to stab a man 10

Public opinion is rarely on the CSA's side. The tabloids hounded it from the start. The shock-horror stories of fathers committing suicide because of CSA demands usually turn out to be nothing so simple. Mon with tales of astronomical CSA bills often turn out to be defaulters with vast arrears. But those stories stick. The "poor fathers" campaign has been one of the most brilliantly mendacious ever.

So what can Harrict Harman's review do to remedy the situation? First it will wring its hands at having to start from here. Tory Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley ignored all sound advice when he first set up the CSA. Eager to use it as a quick fix to plug his leaking social security budget, be very nearly killed off the golden goose at birth. Had he agreed not to reopen old cases and to start slowly with new divorces and separations, public opinion would have swung behind the CSA. But they overturned old court orders, disregarding capital settlements that fathers had given mothers. It was unfair and unworkable - and everyone warned him

Trying to retrieve the situation, Lilley made things

In memoriam: the British strawberry

worse by appeasing fathers. He relaxed the tight formula for assessing incomes, creating new loopholes which fathers are eagerly exploiting – allowing them to deduct their housing costs (so they get themselves colossal mortgages) and allowing travel-to-work costs (in a Porsche). The review may well recommend to a simple formula based on new cases, relaxed to a simple formula based on income costs. returning to a simple formula based on income only.

Currently a sum is included for "spousal mainterages fathers It could be converted to simple pay-

Chasing the self-employed who hide their incomes in a bundred ways has become a nightmare. The Inland Revenue carries a much bigger stick when it comes to investigating false income declarations and should be made to belp more - though rumours it will take over the CSA are wrong.

Most important, the agency should now take on all cases - women not on benefit as well as the poor - to show it exists to help all women and not just to save social security money. That would change its reputation overnight. Other changes: a one-stopshop where the CSA assessment is processed on the same computer as benefits and women are given advice about jobs and childcare on the same day.

Women need to be shown that even getting a modest amount of maintenance can change their lives with costings to prove that it will be worth their while to work. Often mothers on benefit think maintenance is a waste of time as it is just deducted from their giro. There is much pressure for mothers to he offered a bribe to cooperate, allowing them to

keep say £10 of any maintenance collected.

Alan Marsh of the Policy Studies Institute shows that it is the least qualified single mothers who stand to gain most out of maintenance from fathers. If they can get even £15, plus Family Credit, they are three times more likely to get a joh and their average income goes up from £95 to £155. Marsh thinks letting mothers on benefits keep some maintenance would encourage cooperation, leading to floating battalions of them off income support and into jobs.

The name of the game for Labour is breaking the back of the fathers' disgraceful non-payment scam. But that may not happen until the CSA gains itself genuine popular support as the friend of all lone parents - and the resisting fathers come to be seen as frauds not laddish heroes. Harriet Harman faces an almost intractable problem.

\* (http://www.btinternet.com/~nacsa, collude.htm)

#### Fast food, slow witted: the story of the McLibel

he oddest news of all in the last week or so has been the coverage of the McLibel case, which has been reported everywhere as if the losing side actually won In case you have been away at the South Pole writing a symphony for the last five years, let me recap briefly. arge American firm called McDonald's which sells hamburgers in fast food outlets decided to sue two anarchists who had been banding out leaflets in the street saying that McDonald's was a nasty big capitalist firm which chopped down rainforests and torrured chickens (not true,

apparentiv). Now. McDonald's has a widespread reputation for being quick to sue people for libel, so I must be careful bere. I do not want to be sued anarchists. At one of its topfor libel. Nor do I want the level meetings, one of its top lawyer from The Independent ringing up to say that my piece about McDonald's sails a hit near the wind, and it would be

wiser if I wrote about Jonathan Aitken or devoted a whole article to somewhere that had recently gone safely out of business. But I think I can at least speculate on why McDonald's decided to sue two jolly anarchists for banding out a leaflet, a decision which in retrospect was one of the most unfortunate decisions that McDonald's has ever made,

sell its hamburgers outside the Hold on, my phone is

Lawyer: "Mr Kington, I wonder if you could modify that last sentence."

not counting its decision to

Me: "In what way?" Lawyer: Well, you suggest that the world would be a happier place if McDonald's had kept its bamburger

operations at home. Me: "I certainly do. The world would be a happier place if the burger had never

been invented. Lawyer: "Hmm. Well, I But you'll have to be careful about what you say about the burgers made by McDonald's."

Me: "Why? Do they have a reputation for being quick to sue for libel?"

Lawyer: "Lawdy, lawdy, Mr Kington, where have you been all these years? We must never say that someone is quick to sue for libel, or they might sue us for libel."
Me: "I didn't say they were

quick to sue for libel. I said they had a reputation for it." Lawyer: "Did you say the



#### Miles Kington

reputation was wellfounded?"
Mc: "No, sirrec."

Lawyer: "Mmmmm. OK. Carry on." As I was saving, we can well speculate on why McDonald's decided to sue the two jolly

executives may well have stood up and said: "OK, guys. As you have heard, sales are dropping and profits are dropping, and our new products aren't doing too well, and even when we sell our burgers at a discount it

Hold on. Phone's ringing മള്ച്ഥ. Lawver: "You can't say all

isn't helping sales ...

that!" Me: "Why not? It's all true. It was in the business pages the other day. The McDonald's American shareholders deeply unhappy, management bust-up forecast, marketing strategy goes badly wrong, etc, etc ...

Lawyer, "Really?" Me: "Yes. Honestly." Lawyer. "If you say so.

Carry on."
So this executive says, "OK. guys, this is what we are going in do. We are going to sue two unknown anarchists in Britain and initiate the longest-

running libel case in history."
"Won't this make us look complete and utter idios?" says someone on the board.

Hold on. Phone again. Lawyer: "Just checking. Did this board meeting actual take place or are you inventing it?"

Me: "Will you stop interrupting? Some people are trying to get some work done round here.

Lawyer. "All right. Mr Wise Guy. You've gone too far. I am now suing you for libe! on the grounds that you have maliciously portrayed the lawyer for The Independent as an incompetent and out-oftouch ninny."

The rest of this article is now sub judice.



#### WOULD YOU GIVE £ TO HELP US FREE THIS **STARVING HORSE** FROM ITS PRISON?

This ponr, suffering creature is one of twelve neglected horses recently discovered in Cheshire. Its coat infested with lice and its ribs clearly visible, the hurse was left in starve in this small cage. Many of the others were in far worse condition - one sadly died on the day we were called.

ILPH field officer Paul Teasdale, despite thirty years the horses to the nearest ILPH rehabilitation centre. where our staff are now working to save them. Cruelty to horses is still too

He immediately evacuated

common in Britain. As a charity, we need your support. Can you spare £1 or more to help? The larger your donation, the more we can dedicate to equine welfare.

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l enclose a donation of £	to support yo			

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our work. would like more information about your work and how I can become a supporter, ENP23687

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR Anne Colvin House. THE PROTECTION OF HORSES Spetterton, Norfolk,

cent of berries sampled recently by this country - even if the musky hautwhich means that, even if the herries SAFE, the Sustainable Agriculture boy berry which Jane Austen pro-

Some of my complaint is just acsthetic. The attraction of any seasonal delicacy is diminished when it is available the year round. (This month, incidentally, is the time for eating peas from the pod. And we are coming up to a good time for wild salmon: when the posh demand from Henley, Ascot strawberries used to. That is not even the most grievous and Wimbledon is over, there are environmental cost. To kill off soil good quantities on the market for good quantities on the market for

about another month at more reasonable prices.) But the main thing is the taste of these woody, watery abominations which masquerade as doubtless God never did."

Food and Environment Alliance.

found in the corner shop.

as Sainshury's are researching alternatives, hut none have yet been It does not have to be thus. There approved levels, were found in 88 per under cultivation in Europe, and in of it. Enjoy!

nounced as "infinitely superior" has vanished - in some pick-your-own Then there is the question of jobs. Chemical-dependent cultivation is farms, renowned older varieties such less labour-intensive than the old as Cambridge Late Pine and Sir ways. Greengrocers close in the face Joseph Paxton survive amid others of competition from the supermarkets such as Cambridge Rival and Camas demand declines for the locally bridge Favourite. In private gardens grown fruit which is more likely to be it is still possible to find the delicious Royal Sovereign or Honeoye, Tenira, Rouril and Aromel which are all too much trouble for large-scale production. Aficionados can seek out organic growers who are concentrating on good old varieties such as Cambridge Vigour and Hapill which give off the most tremendous smell and taste as

It would be good to think that consumer pressure is forcing a reappraisal by the supermarkets. Alas, not. Indeed, they are moving in the opposite direction. God might not have been able to make a better berry, but the chemical methyl bromide which the delight of which a friend of Izaak the genetic engineers are already Walton once said: "Doubtless God working on the project of the perfect could have made a better berry, but strawberry all year round: a case of strawberry yields for ever. And global warming will doubtless mean that we found. Pesticide residues, albeit at are 60 or more strains of strawberry will be able to grow buge quantities

Paul Vallely

## obituaries gazette Lawrence Payton

Inclusion on the golden oldie format has spoiled many a record for the average listener, but with their breadth and their bounce "1 Can't Help Myself", "It's the Same Old Song". "Reach Out (I'll Be There)". "Standing in the Shadows of Love", "Bernadette", "When She Was My Girl" and "Irresistible" by the Four Tops always sound fresh and vibrant and never fail to entice.

In a career spanning over 40 years and as many albums, the Detroit quartet, in which Lawrence Payton was second tenor and second lead vocalist, sold more than 50 million records and helped shape popular music. Indeed the stylised blueprint of their Motown years is still to be seen in today's US rhythm 'n' blues groups such as New Edition and Boyz II Men and teen acts such as Boyzone and 911.

Born in Detroit in 1938, Lawrence Payton spent his teenage years around the Motorcity and went to the same school as Aretha Franklin. In 1953, along with Renaldo "Obie" Benson, Abdul "Duke" Fakir and Levi Stubbs, he was asked to sing at a friend's party. The foursome got on fa-mously. The following day, they met again at Fakir's house and decided to call themselves the Four Aims. They began performing jazz songs and standards at local functions.

In 1954, a talent agency started to book the quartet outside Detroit: they would sing back up vocals and open for acts like Brook Benton, Count Basic and Billy Eckstine. Two years later, to avoid confusion with the Ames Brothers (a popular white group from Boston), they changed their name to the Four Tops and, in May 1956, recorded "Kiss Me Baby", a one-off single for the Chicago rhythm 'n' blues label Chess.

More unsuccessful recordings appeared on Red Top, Columbia ("Ain't That Love") and Riverside ("Where Are You?") but, all the while, the group was polishing its vocal arrangements, stage act and

In 1963, they eventually came to the attention of Berry Gordy Jnr, a songwriter and entrepreneur who had already started to establish the Motown sound with artists like the Miracles (featuring Smokey Robin-son), Marvin Gaye, Martha & the Vandellas and the Supremes (featuring Diana Ross). Gordy ran his Detroit label like a factory and a family with everything m-house: stylists, choreographers, recording studio, musicians, writers. At first, the Four Tops were signed to the Work-shop label, a jazz subsidiary of Motown, and provided backing vocals for the rest of the roster. The team of Brian and Eddie Holland and Lamont Dozier were the hot composers at the time.

As Levi Stubbs recalls in Joe Smith's excellent collection of interviews Off the Record (1988), the Four Tops were

watching the Temptations at the 20 Grand club in Detroit. Brian Holland came up to us and said: I think we have a song for you guys. It's 1.30 in the morning and he says: listen to it

We said: why don't we go into the studio tonight? He said OK, and after the show we went back to Hissville and recorded "Baby I Need Your Loving" that night, our very first record on Motown. That was one of the unique things about Motown. There were no sel hours to do anything. If you came up with something creative at three in the morning, you called everyone up and everybody would get in their cars and ride down to the studio on the spot and do it. The song came out and it was a big hit.

Showcasing the group's strong harmonies and Levi's yearning lead vocals, "Baby 1 Need Your Loving made the US Top 20 in October 1964. With the Holland/Dozier/ Holland partnership providing the songs, the Four Tops were

In June 1965, the catchy "1 Can't Help Myself" reached number one in the US and sold a million copies. The quartet also had their first British hit with the song and toured the UK under the auspices of the Beatles' manager, Brian Epstein. Following the bouncy
"It's the Same Old Song" and
the moody "Loving You Is
Sweeter Than Ever", the writers and performers surpassed themselves. The revolutionary "Reach Out 171 Be There blended passionate vocals and a great sentiment with flutes, oboes and drums in a symphonic arrangement worthy of Phil Spector's Wall of Sound, It was a world-wide success and a Transatlantic number one in

October 1966. Gordy's boast that Motown was the Sound of Young America now proved true and the Four Tops were very much at the heart of the phenomenon. In 1967, the quartet scored four major hits: "Standing in the Shadows of Love", "Bernadette", "Seven Rooms of Gloom" and "You Keep Run-

ning Away". However, at the end of that year, the Holland/Dozier/Holland team fell out with Gordy over royalties and quit Motown. The Four Tops were left without their number one songwriting team, who subsequently set up their own Invictus label.

The group then came under the aegis of producers/writers like Frank Wilson, Smokey Robinson and Johnny Bristol. They marked time with soulful cover versions of the Lefte Bank's "Walk Away Renee", Tim Hardin's "If I Were a Carpenter" and Tommy Edwards's "It's All in the Game". The quartet broadened its range, singing the mellow "Still Water (Love)", collaborating with the Supremes (on the albums The Magnificent 7 and Return of the Magnificent 7) and even attempting Jim Webb's "Do What You Gotta Do" and "Mac-Arthur Park". In 1971, they also cut "A Simple Game", with the help of the Moody Blues, who

had written the song. By then, Berry Gordy had decided to relocate Motown from Detroit to Los Angeles and, even though Renaldo Benson had co-written the immortal "What's Going On" with Al Cleveland and Marvin Gaye, the Four Tops were feeling less involved. They also thought their boss was spending too much time promoting the careers of Diana Ross, Stevic Wonder, the Temptations and the Jackson Five.

In 1972, the quartet moved to the ABC/Dunbill label bur, following the chart successes of "Keeper of the Castle", "Ain't No Woman (Like the One 1 Got)" and "Are You Man Enough", the soundtrack to the blaxpoitation movie Shaft in Africa, they lost their momentum. Lawrence Payton cut a solo album and they performed Stevie Wonder's "Isn't She Lovely at Aretha Franklin's wedding in April 1978.

The group seemed about to throw in the towel and head for the cabaret circuit but instead, and not for the last time, they came back with a vengeance. Joining the Casablanca imprint in 1981, the Four Tops updated their sound and scored major hits with "When She Was My

Girl" and "Don't Walk Away". By 1983, they were hack at Motown following a 25th anniversary television special during which they staged a mock battle of hits with the Temptations: the breathtaking medley



his fellow Four Tops, "Duke

of the highlights of the joint tour the two classic vocal groups then undertook, Holland/Doziet/ Holland produced some of the Back Where I Belong alhum but R&B tastes had once again moved on and, after working with Phyllis Hyman on the illfated "Magic", the Four Tops explored other avenues. Levi Stubbs, the lead singer, lent his raspy tones to the man-eating plant Audrey II in the 1986 film version of the musical The Little Shop of Horrors. That year, the British protest singer Billy Bragg also paid tribute to the

poignant "Levi Stubbs' Tears". Two years later, following a radical remix of "Reach Out I'll Be There", the Four Tops signed to Arista/BMG and were welcomed with open arms by the musical aristocracy. The Indestructible album with contributions from Smokey Robinson, Aretha Franklin, Huey and dance contest became one Lewis & the News and Phil

Four Tops' frontman in the

Collins, relaunched them once more. With Lamont Dozier, Collins also composed for the group the infectious "Loco in Acapulco" which was featured prominently in Buster, his movie about the Great Train This new exposure put a stop

to a spate of appearances by bogus Four Tops on the Spanish Costa Brava. Over the years, soul acts have had a tendency to splinter and carry on with one or two original members. In fact, the confidence tricksters had picked the wrong act to impersonate. Formed in 1953, the Four Tops had long laid claim to being the longest surviving intact group in the world. In 1990, Stevie Wonder duly inducted Ohie Benson, Duke Fakir, Lawrence Payton and Levi Stubbs into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame, thus putting a seal on an illustrious career. They had already been honoured by the Michigan State June 1997.

Governor who declared an official Four Tops Day (29 July) to thank them for their contri bution to American music and their civic activities in Detroit. In April this year, the quartet also got its own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. With the beaming Lawrence

Payton usually standing next to the lead vocalist Levi Stubbs, the Four Tops were supreme entertainers on stage. Their hreathtaking vocal harmonies justified their perennial appeal and their standing as superb

In spite of all the vagaries of fame and fashion, they came not only to exemplify the happy sound of the Sixties but also to embody the lasting power of soul music.

Pierre Perrone

Lawrence Payson, singer: born Detroit, Michigan 1938; married; died Southfield, Michigan 20

ner nome in Usniku Cir

groups drew hundreds of her

After completing the sev-

enth volume of ber great saga.

at the age of 90, she said: "I

don't feel I'm getting old at all."

So she started on the eighth vol-

ume, of which about a hundred

pages had been completed be-

fore her death. A Suiheisha

museum will be opened at

Gosho, in Nara Prefecture.

a museum illustrating the

movement's history and also

incorporating Sumii's archives.

enduring spirit in the call of hu-man freedom from all prejudice. She helped the Buraku Liber-

ation League, which led to the

formation of a new international

organisation, the Movement

Against All Forms of Discrim-

ination and Racism in 1988.

Through the life and works af

Sue Sumii, there still remains

James Kirkup

She was a great woman, an

admirers.

#### Fidel Velásquez

For more than half a century Fidel Velázquez - "Don Fidel" ran the giant Confederation of Mexican Workers like a personal fiefdom. In return for favours for himself and the workers he controlled, he provided Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, the PRI, with a docile workforce. With the PRI facing the prospect of losing control of Congress for the first time ever in the mid-term elections to be held on 6 July, Don Fidel's death, at the age of 97, gains real

- and symbolic - importance. Born into a poor family, Fidel Velásquez started his working life as a milk delivery boy. As a teenager, he fought in the last years of the 1910-17 revolution. Once the fighting ended, he became heavily involved in trade union politics. He was quick to realise that, if the new revolutionary regime were to survive, it must control the labour movement. At first, socialists and anarchists competed for influence, but in the late 1930s the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) was formed and subsequently inte-grated into the official party, the PRI By 1941, Velázquez be-came the CTM's undisputed boss. Fiercely anti-Communist, he established links with the American Federation of Labor and worked with George Meany to combat Communism

throughout the Americas. But Velázquez's main role was at home, through the iron grip he established over the abour movement. As Alan Riding has pointed out in his 1985 book Medico: inside the volcano, the rules were clear:

The government supports the unon leaders in exchange for political loyalty, and it channels wages and other benefits to unionised workers, themselves a privileged clite comprising only one-third of the 20-million workforce, in exchange for labour tranquillity... Further, the labour movement has been consolled by the same group over four labour movement has been con-trolled by the same group over four decades and during eight adminis-trations. This continuity has brought stability. But the strength of his arrangement was also its vulnerabil-ity, since it leaned heavily on one man, Fidel Velázquez.

In the early years, this weakness was none too apparent to the government, for what it gained from Velazquez, now known as Don Fidel, far outweighed the price it paid for his support. In 1968, during the administration of President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, students led a series of large demonstrations in protest over the lack of political freedom in the country. On 2 October, just 10 days before Mexico was due to host the Olympic Games, the government sent in the army to hreak up a demonstration being held in the city's central square, the Plaza de Tlatelolco.

There were violent clashes. The government admitted that clashes, but the true figure is more likely to have been 200-300. The situation was extremely tense, and the speed with which Don Fidel acted to prevent the unrest spreading to the rest of the country was crucial. In return for his help, Diaz Ordaz agreed to a new labour code, which contained

real benefits for workers. By the early 1970s Don Fidel was strongly entrenched in power, using his own thugs to suppress dissidence in the ranks and making his own deals with factory owners. Feeling threatened, President Luis Eccheverría tried to create a new, more democratic labour movement that he hoped would be more answerable to him. But in the second half of his six-year term conflicts sharpened hetween the government and the private sector and Eccheverria had to

turn to Don Fidel for help. It was a pattern that was to be seen repeatedly. Don Fidel provided successive presidents with essential support, but he always demanded his quid pro quo. In 1976, at a time of acute economic crisis, he agreed to President Lopez Portillo's resons. two daughters); died quest that wage increases Ushiku City, Japan 16 June 1997. should be limited to 10 per cent,

despite an annual inflation rate of 45 per cent. In return, independent trade umons were persecuted and Don Fidel extended his control over an ever larger area of the economy. Just before leaving office; Lopez Portillo expressed his gratitude. The history of Mexico cannot be understood with out Fidel Velázquez. He is an extraordinary and exceptional leader as well as an exemplary patriot and magnificent Mexican."

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Breweries, Pubs & R

7 Building Construction

Under President Miguel de la Madrid, Don Fidel helped imi pose austerity, as demanded by the International Monetary Fund. But tensions erupted as he showed impatience with the technocratic government officials who, in his view, failed to show the necessary political sensitivity in working the system In 1983, Don Fidel even threat ened a general strike to press for an emergency wage increase. But underneath his irritation the fulminations were largely rhetorical, part of an old revo-lutionary ritual that disguised the union leader's key role in underpinning the PRI's dominance.
It is in the 1990s that, under

a combination of economic and political pressures, that this structure of political power has started to crumble. Forced to carry out market-oriented reforms, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari sold off more than 1,000 state companies. This greatly reduced the opportunities for political patronage, one of Don Fidel's well-established mechanisms for maintaining control. And President Etneste Zedillo, who came into office in December 1994, has been December 1994, non-forced to open up the political system, making it possible that, for the first time ever, the PRImay lose its absolute majority in Congress in the July elections.

As a sign of the times, the CTM's iron control over the labour movement is finally being challenged. Small groups of workers in manufacturing, services and education have beguin to organise independent trade unions. Even more significant. ly, 10 unions within the umbrellaorganisation, the Congress of Labour, long controlled by the CTM, have formed a dissident group, the Forum of Unionism Facing the Nation. Its supporters, known as "foristas", have



'Don Fidel': Iron control

been organising their own, independent demonstrations, often in defiance of official orders.

Yet Don Fidel, a grumpy old-man in his nineties, almost blind, who shuffled along unsteadily, sometimes requiring a wheelchair, and mumbled and drooled as he spoke, seemed invincible. No one dared to talk openly of a successor while ne. lived. In March this year, he was appointed for another six-year term of office. He was reported as saying, without a hint of humour, "I'm healthy enough, but this will probably be my last term. My comrades may ask me to stay on after 2004 but I think that would be too much. We need new leaders."

That is a sentiment with which most Mexicans would agree, though perhaps not in the sense he intended.

Sue Branford

Fidel Velásquez, trade souon leader: born San Pedro Att capotzaltongo, Mexico 24 April 1900; married 1951 Nora Quintana (three children); died Mexico City 21 June 1997.

#### Sue Sumii

Why do some people, through no fault of their own, a iart from the basic error of having been born, become outcasts of society - a society no longer desirable when even one of its creatures is rejected, mocked,

Such societies have always existed, in every region of the world, in the animal as well as the human realms. In Japan, unsuspected by the passing tourist, the company representative on a temporary stint, there exist a minority group, the burakumin, estimated at three million outcast people existing in some 6,000 communities scattered over the whole land and comprising over 2 per cent of the Japanese population. One of the various names for them is hinin, literally "non-humans". They have been discriminated against for centuries. Burakamin were originally people engaged in trades associated with animal slaughter (a crime in the Buddhist religion) and the handling and burial of the dead. They were therefore considered to be "polluted" and not fit to mingle with the rest of their fellow men.

Despite laws officially abolishing such racial discrimination, it still continues. Outside government buildings, huge



hanners hang proclaiming "Dowa mondai [assimilation] now!" (Buraku is no longer PC, though it is still used.) But few people take much notice of such empty exhortations. Employment, marriage, accommodation, education are still among the subjects for which people's family background is closely inspected, often by specialist detective agencies. Companies engaging new workers possess secret (and illegal) lists of inhabitants in the burakumin districts of cities, towns and vil-

One of the largest burakumin populations can be found in Nara Prefectore, where the hest-selling anti-discrimination

Marriages

ly have influenced her choice of subject matter, the daily lives of the burakumin. She started writing her great seven-volume saga Hashi no nai kawa (The River With No Bridge) in 1961. at the age of 59, an immense work of wide popular appeal that was to occupy her for almost the rest of her long life.

It was not the first time that a great Japanese novel had been written on such a subject. The poet and novelist Toson Shimazaki puhlished his first work of fiction on the burakumin phenomenon, Hakai ("The Broken Commandment"), in 1906, a landmark in Japanese realism. It is about a schoolteacher who keeps his outcast origins secret (in obedience to his father's "commandment") until the end of the novel, when he hreaks his promise. It is one of the finest and most honest novels ever written in Japanese, with a hero and other characters of memorable authenticity, and with dialogue of untypical Japanese

frankness. Sumii's story is also one concerning a burakamin youth who grows up under the hurden of prejudice in a hypocritical society but fights to become a

OII MOVEMENT. I HE KINET IYUI No Bridge has sold over eight million copies. It has twice been filmed, first in two parts by the politically engaged director Tadashi Imai in 1969 and 1970, and then by Yoichi Higashi in 1992. An English translation was published in 1992.

Sue Sumii had an unusually good education for a woman in period of almost exclusively male domination, a form of sexual discrimination that she was also to fight against all her life. She graduated from Haramato Women's High School, and at the age of 18 went to Tokyo to work for the publisher Kodansha. But after a couple of years she rebelled against working conditions that belittled women and resigned.

In 1921, she married Shigeru Inuta, a literary activist prominent in the proletarian agrarian movement producing "peasant literature" in defence of poor farmers. They founded the Peasant Literature Study Society, which was anti-authority and campaigned for sexual and social equality. It was also "antiurban", so in 1935 they moved to Inuta's birthplace at Hitachino in Ibaraki Prefecture,

where they worked on the land

novelist Sue Sumii was born, leader in the hurakumin, liber- and produced four children, two and a lecture-discussion hall Sumii had started writing in Ibaraki Prefecture, where regular lectures and study

early in her life, mainly stories for young people associated with nomin bungaku or the agrarian literature movement. One of these, Yoake asaake ("Dawn-Daybreak") won the Mainichi Publishing Culture prize in 1954. In 1957, her hushand died, and in the following year she started writing the first volume of The River Wills No Bridge, which was first serialised in Buraku, the magazine of the Buraku Mondai Kenkyusho or Buraku Study Group. It was a huge success, and was published in hardback in 1961.

The book was based on her own observations of burnkumin life, and tells the story of a boy growing up in an urban hamlet who becomes a member of the Suiheisha or "Levellers" movement, the hirth of which is described in vividly emotional scenes. The movement had started in 1922, when the first meeting of the group was held in Kyoto, and spread over the whole of Japan.

Sue Sumii was a pacifist as well as a writer against all kinds of discrimination. She used her royalties from her best-selling books to build a small cinema

Sue Sumii, writer and campaigner: born Nara Prefecture. Japan 1902: married 1921 Shigeru Inuta (died 1957; two

hope for us.

#### CASE SUMMARIES

23 June 1996

no more than a presumption of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and thus in an exceptional case, could be rebutted. The instant case was such a case in that the driver, who had an unblemished record, had asserted that the speed limit had not been displayed at the time when his car had been photographed by the automatic cameras, and the witness who gave evidence as to the removal of the film from the overhead gantry could give no information as to the workings of the system.

Timothy Spencer (CPS) for the appellant; Lindsay Macdonald (Amery Parkes, Basingstoke) for the respondent.

Arnold v DPP; QBD Div Ct (Sime Brown LJ. Owen J) 9 June 1997. In the modern days of computer technology it was not reasonable to expect the specifically authorised person to sign every notice served under s 172

which emanated from the Central Ticket Office. A notice which bore a printed subscription relating to the sender of the natice and indicating that he was acting for the Chief Constable was satisfactory. There was no requirement that the notice should assert in terms that the sender was duly authorised by the Chief Bernard Tetlow (Arnold Du Feu, Oxford)

for the appellant: Rhodri Price-Lewis (CPS) for the respondent.

Magistrates' Courts R v Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court, ex p DPP; QBD Div Ct (Simon Brown LI. Owen J) 10 June 1997.

If a stipendiary magistrate disapproved of the conduct of the prosecution, a senior representative of the CPS could be sent for so that the stipendiary's concerns could be put to him 1985".

m open court and the prosecution could then be penalised m costs. Where, however, the conduct disapproved of was that of a store detective, the stipendiary could not dismiss the charge as a means of disciplining that detective and as a means of encouraging store detectives generally to act more appropriately in the future; but should adjourn the case pursuant to the power in s 10(1) of the Magistrates, Courts Act. 1980 for a rehearing before a

applicant; neither the respondent nat. the defendant appeared not were repre-

CORRECTION: In R v Staines & anr (Case Summaries, 16 June 1997) the reference to answers given under comput-sion pursuant to s 177 of the Financial Services Acr 1986 should have read "pursuant to s 434 of the Companies Act

#### Births, **Marriages** & Deaths

HARRIS: On 16 June 1997, to Stefanie (née O'Bryen) and Steven, a son, Christian, a brother for Jessica and

MARRIAGES WIRTZ/WHITTAKER: And Wirtz and Sandie Whittaker are pleased to announce that their marriage took place in Gretna Green on 2t June

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2010. Charges are £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS The Queen and The Dube of Editationsh with Came and carry out engagements in Newfoundhaed and Carrio. The Bube of Kant, President, the All Engle. Lower Results and Croquet Cloth, opens the new N. Court on the opening day of the Wanthledom Chaptenships, Lewise SWIN.

Changing of the Guard

Mr M.P. Usher and Miss C. M. Furloug The marriage took place on Satur-day 2t June, at St Michael's Church, Rossington, Doncaster, between Caroline Mary, daughter of Mr John and Dr Olive Furlong, and Michael Paul, son of Mr and Mrs Brian Usher. The bride was attended by Miss Joanne Crabb, Miss Katrina MacConnachie, Amadeus Furiong and Cornelius Furiong. Mr Howard Langford was

Birthdays

Mr Stuart Andrews, former Head Master, Clifton College, 65; Mr Christopher Castleman, formerly chief executive, Hill Samuel, 56; The Very Rev Professor Henry Chadwick, former Master, Peterhouse College, Cambridge, 77; Mr Nicholas Cleobury, conductor, 47; Sir David Crouch, former MP, 78; Mr Michael Davies, chairman, Simon Engineering, 63; Sir John Elliott, Regius Proessor of Modern History, Oxford University, 67; Mr Adam Faith, singer and actor, 57; The Right Rev Lord Habgood, former Archbishop of York, 70; Mr Alan Haselhurst MP, 60; Mr John Hayes MP, 39; Mr Ju-

lian Hipwood, polo player, 51; Lord

Irvine of Lairg QC, Lord Chancel-lor, 57; Miss Miriam Kartin, actress, 72; Admiral Sir Horace Law, 86; Sir Peter Millett, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 65: Lord Newall, chairman, British Greyhound Racing Board, 67; Miss Maggie Philbin, broadcaster, 42; Mr James Plaskitt MP, 43; Mr John Prebble, novelist, historian and playwright, 82; Sir John Pringle, a judge of the High Court of Northern Ireland, 68; Sir Martin Rees, Astronomer Royal, 55; Professor Isaac Schapera, anthropologist, 92; Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior, Emeritus Professor of Animal Pathology, Cambridge University, 71; The Right Rev Keith Sutton, Bishop of Lichfield, 63; Mr Anthony Thwaite, poet, 67: Colonel John Timmins, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, 65; Miss Irene Worth, actress, 81.

Anniversaries

Births: Giambattista Vico, philosopher and jurist, 1668; Anna Akhmatova (Anna Andreyevna Gorenko) poet, 1889; Edward, Duke of Windsor, 1894; Winifred Holtby, novelist, 1898. Deaths: Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope, traveller and eccentric. 1839; Cecil James Sharp, founder of the English Folk Society, 1924; Michael Arlen (Dikran Kouyoumdjian), novelist, 1956; Olivia Manning,

novelist, 1980. On this day: Keble College, Oxford, opened, 1870; the German Social Democratic Party published an article in the newspaper Vorsats calling on their government to sue for peace, 1915; the British diplomats Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean fled to the Soviet Union, 1951; agreement was reached in Luxembourg on the terms of Britain's entry into the Common Market, 1971. Today is the Feast Day of St Agrippina, St Etheldreds or Audrey, St Libert or Liebert, St Thomas Corsini and St Thomas Garnet.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum; Divia Patel and Rosemary Miles, "Contemporary Prints and Posters from India and Pakistan", 2.30pm.
British Museum: Fred Wilson "Silent Message of the Museum",

Luncheons

Lord Mayor of Westminster The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Mr Ronald Raymond-Cox, and the Lady Mayoress. Mrs Raymond-Cox, were the hosts at a buffet inneheon held yesterday at City Hall, London SWI, following the annual civic service at Westminster Abbey,

The following notes of judgments were prepared by the re-porters of the All England Law Reports.

Court Martial R v Paine: CA Cr Div tStuart-Smith

LJ. Forbesl, Easty J) 23 May 1997. The offence of flying an aircraft in a manner causing or likely to cause unnecessary annoyance to a person contrary to \$ 52 of the Air Force Act 1955 was not one of strict liability. The necessary mens rea was an intention to fly in the prohibited manner, or recklessness as to whether annoyance was or was likely to be caused. Edward Brown (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the appellant; Simon Morgan (Director, Air Force Legal Services)

for the Crown.

Road Traffic DPP v Underwood; QBD Div Ct (Simon Brown LJ. Owen J) 4 June 1997. Although there was a presumption that the speed enforcement system on the M25 was working properly, it was fresh bench.

John McGuinness (CES) for the

Bulling Concentre Sting Pour Established Stille

And an electrical and also are also as a second and an electrical and also are also as a second and an electrical and also are also as a second and an electrical and an electrical and an electrical and an electrical and also are also are

#### Retailers' results will offer important clue to direction of interest rates

With growing evidence shop sales are surging and could tempt the newly independent Bank of England to lift interest rates next month, it is, perhaps, fitting that retailers are due to play a big role in this

week's results programme.

May's retail sales recorded a sharp gain. And that was before Halifax and Norwich Union loot became available. With Woolwich due next month and the conversion bandwagon gathering strength all the signs of a relentless spending spree

are erupting.
Asda, Great Universal Stores and Harvey Nichols make up the retail contingent. The superstores chain, producing year's figures on Thursday, is finding itself increasingly under the stock market microscope with a number of analysts extremely cautious. Under Archie Norman, Asda

staged a dramatic revival.

When he arrived the group was past its sell-by date and seemed

destined to fall victim to a rescue takeover bid at a knockdown price.

The shares bumped along at 22p in 1993; a few weeks ago they touched 129p.

The Norman conquest was a remarkable achievement. He transformed the business from the favourite target of stand-up comedians to a highly sophis-ticated retailing operation chal-lenging the might of Tesco. But nowadays Mr Norman is a Tory MP, devoting just two

days a week to Asda. There is no doubt the group has a first-class management team and on a day-to-day basis the Norman presence will not be missed. There are, however, worries the inspirational touch, so essential to a big retail player, will no longer be as sharp and Paul Smiddy, analyst at Crédit Lyonnais Laing, declared last month: "There is a tone of desperation to some of by its short-lived pursuit of the Welcome Break motorway services stations. Its now-ended interest in the up-for-sale Littlewoods stores was regarded as annther worrying development.

Thursday's results will be startling; around £420m against £304.6m. But they will include £80m from the sale of a stake in Allied Carpets. Stripping out the Allied windfall, profits will be some 12 per cent higher at £340m.

Tony MacNeary and Mike Dennis, analysts at NatWest Securities, have taken a negative view of Asda for some time and believe the shares should be sold. They see sales growth slowing, margins squeezed and "Asda delivering only limited shareholder value compared to its major rivals". Great Universal Stores, once

known as "gorgeous Gussies" in the market, is expected to suffer the indignity of a profits fall when it reports on

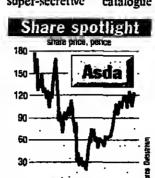


STOCK MARKET WEEK

#### DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

Thursday, A 3 per cent decline to £546m is likely. Under new chairman Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, the super-secretive catalogue



shopping group, a veritable sleeping grant with a huge cash pile, has had an energetic year. It splashed out £1bn, its first big deal for 30 years, for Experian. one of the biggest business in-

formation concerns in the US. So last year's £1.2bn cash mountain will bave been seriously eroded although a subsequent property deal with British Land will repair some of the damage. Lord Wolfson is clearly in-

tent nn steering GUS on a much more adventurous course. Many parts of the jigsaw have yet to be put in place. One possibility the market still ponders is an agreed takeover for Next, the high-street trend-

Shares of Harvey Nichols, which has reaped rich rewards from its Absolutely Fabulous association, have lost much of their glitter as the appeal of the stores sector has diminished. Year's profits today should be

around £13m, up from £9.2m.
A Harvey Nicks opened in Leeds in October and the Oxo restaurant in London are regarded as the Hong Kong-controlled group's pace-setters. More store and restaurant openings are planned.

Other groups which could hope to enjoy some of the conversion cash include First Leisure Corporation; brewer Greene King and upmarket house builder, Berkeley.

FLC's half-year results tomorrow will create little excitement; they are likely to be near to last year's £16.4m. But the occasion will give the new chief, Michael Grade, the former head of Channel Fnur TV, a chance to articulate the group's development plans.

It has given the impression for a 45 per cent upsurge to £35.7m. lately nf no longer being cer-tain about its direction, FLC Berkeley, planning to trans-form the old Harrods deposibas flirted with pubs and some feel, despite recent expenditure, is not truly wedded to hin-

tory at Barnes into a luxury residential complex, should have enjoyed an exceedingly good year and projections of heen made for Thursday's profits Another which should man rewards from the demutuali-

sation movement is Vendome. the luxury goods group. It should produce year's profits tomorrow little changed at around £26thm. Halma, an environmental

engineer, may, at hest, collect a tiny slice of the conversion bonanza. Even so its results and accompanying statement deserve careful attention. Around £39.5m against £33.6m is expected. Still, any sort of increase tomorrow will ensure the group's 21st year of unin-Quite an achievement,

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Last month former chief ex-

ecutive John Chalan elinehed

FLC's biggest deal, the folm takeover of the Riverside

health and fitness business.

The flamboyant, cigar-chomping new chief is obviously fully

behind the acquisition and it

could he that he intends to

make FLC an even fitter par-

ticipant in the booming health club world. FLC's last unsuc-

cessful pub excursion was a hid

to take over The Magic Puh

Co. It lost to Greene King

which splashed out £197.5m.

The East Anglian hrewer

rolls out year's figures on

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acquisition. NatWest is looking

55 108 102. Prices are in stering except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 10 10 401. 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The procedurings (P.E) ratio is the share as 200 price divided by last year's earnings per chairs, excluding exceptional terms.

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## -business & city BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## G7 warns UK must raise rates

Brown 'must keep inflation under control and maintain budget deficit reductions'

**Diane Coyle** Denver

The club of leading industrial nations warned Gordon Brown, attending his first G7 summit this weekend, that the UK would need to raise interest rates and reduce government borrowing to prevent the economy from overheating. The UK "must keep inflation

pressures under control and maintain budget deficit reduction", according to the summit's economic statement. It also hacked the Government's diagnosis that Britain needed to undertake reforms of the education system and welfare.

The warning about interest rates and hudget policy, which emerged from the G7s normal discussion of the performance of member economies, was nelther unexpected nor unwelcome to the Chancellor.

Mr Brown said: "The world's finance ministers have endorsed the agenda I am pursuing in Britain - long-term monetary stability through our reforms to the Bank of England, longterm fiscal stability and reform to raise the long-run growth po-

These, he said, would be the key themes of his first Budget. He also hailed what he said was the G7's recognition that better education and training and welfare state reform were needed to ensure the benefits of growth reached the many and

pound above DM2.85 to its highest since July 1992 at the end of last week.

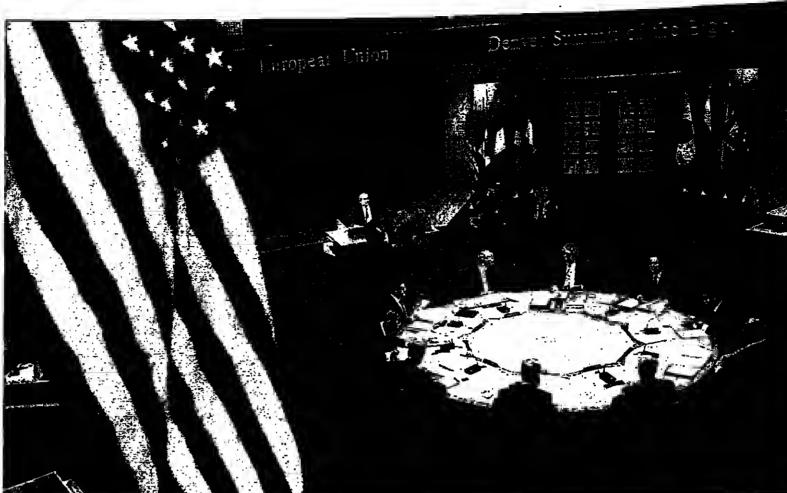
This weekend's statement from the finance ministers, meeting as the Seven, without Russia, was generally optimistic. But US triumphalism about its extraordinarily healtby economy did not play well with the

other delegations. President Bill Clinton displayed it well in a weekend radio address: "Our economy is the healthiest in a generation and the strongest in the world, with the lowest unemployment in 24 years, the lowest inflation in 30 years, the biggest decline in inequality among our working families since the 1960s, and over 12 million new jobs."

British sources said Tony Blair had a great deal of admi-ration for President Clinton's record on joh creation, and that the UK and US shared a common economic agenda.

However, officials from other countries indicated they were looking forward to a more constructive and detailed discussion about Europe's employment problems at the two summits to be hosted by the UK next year. A G7 jobs summit will take place in Fehruary, and the an-nual summit will be held in Birmingham in June.

The Prime Minister laid the ground for this yesterday, launching a discussion on how the world's richest countries should cope with the globalisation of the world economy. The prospect of rising inter-est rates in the UK took the cific proposals for improving



Playing cool: The G7 meeting in Denver yesterday where concerns were expressed about Britain's economy overheating

employability and fostering job-

The ministers meeting in Denver at the weekend said prospects for the world economy were very favourable, although most of the hig economies needed further reductions in government hudget deficits. Continuing non-inflationary growth was in prospect, with the German and French economies likely to improve. The statement warned of the

need for further deregulation of the Japanese economy, especially as the Japanese govern-ment has no other policy options open to it. Deregulation was the theme of the new trade accord between the US and

the summit, with America playing an advisory role in the reform of four key sectors of the Japanese economy.

For the first time the finance ministers commented on the European single currency, saying it was important that it was underpinned by sound macroeconomic and structural polithe EU Commission, which had hoped for G7 backing for the single currency.

A separate report from the finance ministers reviewed the progress made on improving international financial supervision since the Mexican crisis exploded two-and-a-half years ago. New arrangements for funding

Photograph: Reuter ages were finalised last autumn.

The G7 wants further progress on co-operation between different national regulators. President Clinton said: "Our finance ministers have agreed that we should create a global

network of banking and marketing officials to monitor financial policies and police

## Barclays scotches NatWest bid talk

Michael Harrison

Barclays Bank yesterday poured cold water on reports it is considering a bid for its high street rival National Westminster Bank. A spokesman said: "It is pure speculation. As far as I am aware there is no basis of truth in it." Industry observers were also doubtful whether a bid would be made and even more dubious about its prospects of. getting past the competition authorities.

NatWest is seen as being vul-nerable to a hid after its failed merger approach to Abbey National and the profits warning which accompanied last week's departure of Martin Owen, chief executive of its investment bank-ing arm, NatWest Markets. But a spokesman said it had

not received any approach from Barclays, nor was there pressure from institutional shareholders for further top manage ment changes. There have been mutterings about the position of Lord Alexander, its chairman, and Derek Wanless, chief executive.

A merger between Barclays and NatWest would create a hanking colossus equal in size to Lloyds TSB in terms of market capitalisation. But it would face daunting political and regulatory hurdles because of the heavy job losses and hranch clo sures that would inevitably follow and the dominant position the combined group would have in personal banking and cor

porate lending.
Together, Barclays and NatWest would account for 40 per cent of all personal bank accounts in the UK and over 50 per cent of the market for lending to small and medium-sized businesses. A merger would. also bring together the country's two higgest credit card issuers. For those reasons one bank-

ing source said yesterday: "I cannot think this is a serious proposition." It was also pointed out that Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, is not interested in turning the hank into a monolith, believing the quality of its loan book is far more important than its size.

Barclays is capitalised at £17.7bn and has 8 million cus tomers, 85,000 staff, 2,000 £186bn. NatWest is valued at £12.8hn and has 7.5 million customers, 71,000 staff, just over 1,900 hranches and assets of £185bn.

Mr Owen's departure for lows the discovery of a £90m hole in NWM's interest rate options husiness. He is expected to receive a pay-off of about £1m. The trader at the centre of the losses, Kyriacos Papouis, left Nat West last year and four other senior managers have been suspended. Separately there were reports yesterday. bonuses: "They will certainly have to pay the new man more." that NWM's equity business have to pay the new man more."

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#### Shake-up for Private **Finance Initiative**

Michael Harrison

The Private Finance Panel is expected to be abolished today by the Government as part of a sweeping overhaul of the way public projects are funded Initiative.

Geoffrey Rohinson, the Paymaster General, will announce the changes following a monthlong review of the PFI carried out by Malcolm Bates, former deputy managing director of GEC. Other changes are expected to involve a reorganisation of the Private Finance Executive and a strengthening of the private finance units operating within individual government departments.

Mr Rohinson sacked Alastair Ross Goobey, the chairman of the Private Finance Panel, when

Now the remainder of the 10strong panel is expected to be disbanded and responsibility for the initiative shifted to a within the Treasury and reporting direct to Mr Robinson.

speed up the flow of PFI projects which are targeted to reach £14bn by the end of 1998-99. As a first step, Mr Robinson scrapped the rule whereby all Whitehall capital spending projects had to be tested against the PFI before being allowed to proceed. He has also announced a new focus on priority projects within government departments and new legislation to help deliver large hospital and local authority PFI projects.

The remit given to Mr Bates, now chairman of Premier Farthe Private Finance Panel, when nell and the insurance group he launched the review in May. Pearl, was to examine the roles

of the Panel, the Executive and the new Treasury taskforce and tackle policy issues such as how to make it easier to do PFI public-private taskforce set up deals. He reported his findings to Mr Robinson 10 days ago. Mr Ross Goobey, chief ex-

manager Hermes, had been chairman of the Panel since May 1996. Other members of the panel include Neville Simms, chief executive of the construction company Tarmac, Murray Stuart, chairman of ScottishPower, and Steve Robson, a senior Treasury official. Its chief executive is David Steeds, previously corporate development director with Ser-

Although the universal testing rule has been abandoned, Mr Robinson made clear that departments could not expect any increase in their capital budgets.

#### Beleaguered Railtrack seeks 'big hitter' to replace Edmonds

and Andrew Yates

John Edmonds, chief executive of Railtrack, is expected to step down early to be replaced by someone from outside the rail his contract expires next March.

Sir Boh Horton, Railtrack's chairman, is thought to he keen to hring in a new chief executive with a wider commercial background who can push investment in the rail network ahead mure quickly. Although Railtrack said there was no conflict and would not comment on the timing of Mr Edmonds departure, Sir Boh is believed to be dissatisfied over the slow pace of investment in infra-

structure. Under Mr Edmonds, Railtrack has also had increasingly severe public spats with the rail regulator, John Swift QC, and the Government. He joined the company, then British Rail. Railtrack, which has already

employed London-based headhunter Spencer Stuart, is berail and utility sector for a "big hitter" with broad commercial experience. One observer said the change was welcome: "The problem with Railtrack is that it is still

hide-bound by public sector thinking. British Rail has always looked for ways not to spend money and that is rather the feeling with John Edmonds. "The company needs someone who wants to spend and is committed to investment -

someone with a hit more flair

and flexibility." After floating in May last year, Railtrack was heavily crit-

one on building computer

databases, hilling systems and in

marketing expenses. Figures released to the in-

dustry last week by Ofgas, the watchdog, showed 370,000 cus-

tomers have so far switched



Sidelined: John Edmonds is expected to retire early

icised over low levels of investment in renewing and expanding the rail network. Analysis say that pressure from the rail regulator to make Railtrack

the opening of a third trial

area later this year covering 2

million homes in Scotland and

the North-east of England. In-dependent suppliers will meet Clare Spottiswoode, the regu-

lator, today and are expected to

delay the Scottish trial from Oc-

TransCo, the BG pipeline business, had pleaded for more

time to build a new computer

database to track customers as they moved supplier.

The shape of the emerging domestic gas market has sur-

prised observers after the hig su-

permarket and oil giants

decided not to participate. They

have been put off in part by non-

tober to mid-November.

port Secretary John Prescott's recent hints that Railtrack is liable for the windfall tax increases pressure for change. "Railtrack's hoss should be someone who can negotiate

more accountable and Trans-

one who's been around the block a hit more than Edmonds," another analyst said. However, some analysts think Railtrack will find it hard to attract someone of the right calibre. One said: "I think there is a possible problem for someone coming into this culture from the commercial sector. Over the past six months Railtrack has

gone backwards." Pay will also he a factor. In 1995/6 Mr Edmonds earned £136,000 hasic salary and £216,000 with henefits and

#### IN BRIEF

#### Manufacturing pay awards kept down

Pay settlements in manufacturing remain subdued despite falling unemployment, figures released today by the Confederation of British Industry show. According to the CBI's latest pay databank survey, awards averaged 3.3 per cent in the three months up to the end of April, compared with 3.2 per cent in the first quarter of the year. Nearly four in 10 manufacturers said pay awards were being kept down by their inability to increase prices while a quarter identified low profits as an important factor.

#### Department store sales up 10 per cent

The department store sector is one of the fastest-growing retail markets in the UK despite being consistently written off as a dying hreed, according to a report by Corporate Intelligence on Relating. The top 50 department store groups increased their sales by 5.7 per cent to £5.2bn in 1995-96 with an acceleration to almost 10 per cent esomated for 1996-97. This compares with equivalent groups rates for the relation of the retail rates of 3.4 and 3.5. lent growth rates for the whole of the retail trade of 3.9 and per cent respectively.

#### Firms to outsource customer service

More than half of the UK's top 1,000 companies are consider ing outsourcing their customer service operations over the next three years, says a survey released today. Ventura, the customer service group, says the trend towards outsourcing is being de ven by more demanding consumer expectations. Compared with five years ago, 86 per cent of customers expect a better service. 47 per cent complain more and 83 per cent think British service. is "a great deal worse" than in the US.

#### CWC stirs up business phone price war

The price war in the business telephone market intensified yesterday after Cable & Wireless Communications launched what it claims is the lowest local daytime rate costing 1.8p a minute CWC, which comprises Mercury, Bell CahleMedia, Nyner and Vidcotron, is also introducing new national and international rates which it says undercut BT by between 39 and 48 per cent.

#### Oppenheimer starts European operation

The US investment hank Oppenheimer & Co is to launch European investment hanking operation focusing initially on information technology and healthcare sectors. The new division will be run from Oppenheimer International's London offices a will be headed by Adrian Merryman.

#### Northern Electric and Calortex in alliance talks

Chris Godsmark Business Correspondent

Northern Electric, the USowned regional electricity com-pany, is in talks with Calortex, the UK's leading independent domestic gas business, which could see the two companies form an alliance to make a joint push into the emerging competitive energy markets. Calortex's 50 per cent share-

holder, Calor Group, has put part of its stake in the husiness up for sale and is understood to have held discussions with at least three regional electricity companies (RECs). Northern Electric is thought to be the main bidder left in the ring, though power generators and some energy companies have also been approached. The other Calortex shareholder, Texaco, has decided to hold on

enable Calortex to expand from competition from next April. It Eastern Group, which have invested heavily in trials of domestic gas competition. Centrica, the demerged BG

to its investment.

A link with an REC would

gas into electricity retailing as the power market opens to would join combat with other combined energy sellers in the shape of ScottishPower and supply husiness, has also pledged to move into the electricity market, while United Utilities last week launched its own energy business.

Gas and electricity suppliers will join forces this week to launch 1998 as full competition facing all the participants will be a code of practice to protect domestic consumers from dubious emerges. Most of the cash has the opening of a third trial sales tactics. The Association of Energy Suppliers, to be formally announced

on Wednesday, is an attempt in head off growing criticism of doorstep-selling practices in the domestic gas competition tri-als in the south of England. The code will, for the first time, include a tribunal panel with sanctions available if members misbehave. One supplier, Eastern Natural Gas, has faced strong criticism from the Gas Consumers Council and watchdog, Ofs, after members of its sales force allegedly told customers British gas, after members of its sales force anegon. Gas had changed its name to "Eastern".

The move by Calor comes after its majority shareholder, the privately owned Dutch food and energy company, SHV, took full control of the company earlier this year in a £250m agreed hid. SHV wants to cut its stake in Calortex to around

15 per cent to free up resources for liquid petroleum gas projects in developing countries.

Sources suggested Calortex was likely to spend more than £30m this year on its assault on

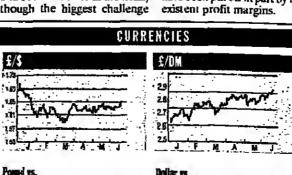
the domestic gas market and

could raise this spending in

from BG to new suppliers out of 2 million households taking part in the competition trials. Numbers moving to independent gas companies are running at about 10,000 a month, with Calortex thought to have

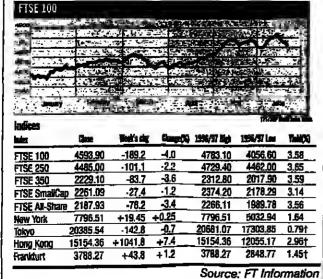
grabbed well over 100,000 customers. Calortex has managed to maintain its lead over Eastern and ScottishPower in the trials,

though the higgest challenge



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#### **GAVYN DAVIES**

There is no reason public debt should be eliminated altogether. even in the most draconian theory of public finance. It is sufficient to ensure the debt/GDP ratio is stable, or that public assets rise in line with public liabilities'

### How Brown could frame his fiscal stability pact

amendment for the EU. The accompanying regulation agreed in Amsterdam, which does have the force of law, would puoish

The standard which simed to appear to the standard to appear to the standard which simed to appear to the standard to t framework for the operation of the Bank of England which aimed to enhance the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of monetary policy-making in this country. Unveiling this reform, the Chancellor said be was introducing a British solution to a British problem, implying the new framework was intended to operate outside EMU, rather than providing a bridge that would make entry into EMU more likely. Indeed, several aspects of the new system were not compatible with EMU membership, thus emphasising that the Government was preparing for at least a period of life uut-

side the single currency.

After his success with the new monetary policy framework, the next item Gordon Brown might examine is the parallel framework for fiscal policy outside EMU. After all, the signature last week uf the Stability Pact in Amsterdam has taken care of that problem for future EMU members hut, as in the case of monetary policy, countries re-maining outside the single corrency will need to act for themselves. While there is no organt need to make changes to our present mech-anism, there could be advantages in so doing. and I would like to put some possibilities on the agenda for discussion.

The importance of the Stability Pact for future EMU members has not been fully grasped. At Amsterdam, member states ed a resolution that promised that after EMU they would aim to hold their budget positions "close to balance or in surplus" over the medium term. Although resolutions are simply statements of political intent, without the full force of Community law behind them, this announcement is a hig step in the direction of a "balanced budget constitutional

countries only if they allowed their budget deficits to exceed 3 per cent of GDP, but there will be continuous EU surveillance procedures based on the medium-term objective of hudget balance.

It seems that the Council of Ministers will be able to recommend that member states should make changes to their plans to ensure the balanced budget objective is respected in the medium term.

This amounts to nothing more than moral suasion, but over time it may become in-creasingly difficult for EMU members to present medium-term plans to the EU on any hasis other than fiscal balance. The same may he true, iocidentally, in the US, where the halanced budget constitutional amendment failed by one vote in the Senate last year, but has now been replaced by an agreement be- on in the Stability Pact.

that the UK should simply submit itself voluntarily to the medium-term objective of the Stability Pact (though obviously not to the fines), even if we do not join the single cur-rency. But there are problems with this approach, since the objectives of the Stability Pact do not necessarily coincide with those contained in the Labour manifesto. Before the election, the Government promised that the ratio of public debt to GDP would be stabilised at a low and prudent level, and pledged it would maintain the "goldeo rule" of public finance, whereby the public sector

would borrow only to invest. These two commitments translate into targets for the budget deficit of 2.5 per cent and I per cent of GDP respectively, both much higher than the the budget balance criteri-

Balanced budget

In my opinion, the Pact is unnecessarily long-term objectives for public debt mactough, and the Brown criteria are basically agement - called the fundamental principles. superior. The EU requirement to balance the budget over the medium term implies that the outstanding stock of public debt will in future be unchanged in nominal terms. which in turn would mean it eventually dwindles almost to nothing compared to the ris-ing level of GDP. There is absolutely no reason public debt should be eliminated altogether, even in the most draconian theory of public finance. It is sufficient to ensure the debt/GDP ratio is stable, or that public assets rise in line with public liabilities, whichever is the tougher objective. This is the thinking behind Mr Brown's "criteria".

One option for the Chancellor would therefore be simply to reiterate his twio tar-gets in each Budget speech, and to ensure that his fiscal programme matches these requirements each year. This would essentially maintain the present system unchanged However, the case against this procedure is that the budgetary process is subject to political manipulation, as we saw in the final Ken Clarke Budget, which made a series of questionable assumptions to flatter the state of the public finances. This tendency to bend the rules of public finance around election time imparts a long-term upward bias to the level of public debt, and it would be useful to have a countervailing force in the system to make this more difficult.

In New Zealand, the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1994 was passed to address this nced. It was designed to improve the trans-parency and accountability of fiscal decisions, without eliminating the justifiable right of clected politicians to adjust the hudgetary stance when they choose to do so. An equivalent Act in the UK would do the fol-lowing: first, it would establish over-arching shortly to be presented to Parliament.

agement - called the fundamental principles.
These would be the golden rule, or the stability of the debt/GDP ratio at a prudent level, whichever was the more stringent objective. (The relationship between the two would vary over time, depending on the level of public investment.) Second, it would establish a set of accounting practices and disclosure re-quirements which would make it difficult for the Chancellor of the day to manipulate the published accounts to his or her own advantage. Third, it would establish a reporting procedure the Chancellor would need to use if there were any short-term deviation from the fundamental priociples. One op-tion here would be for the Treasury to produce a Green Budget document around four months before the Budget itself, and to have this document subjected to scrutiny by the Commons Select Committee on the Treasury. Fourth, an independent body would be given the task of examining and publishing a report on the fiscal arithmetic, both at the Green Budget stage and immediately after the Budget itself. This independent body could be the National Audit Office, employed by Mr Brown last week, but it would need to beef up its level of economic expertise if it is to be taken seriously in a wider role.

The overall objective of these reforms would be to ensure that future Chancellors would not be able to bloat the level of publie debt without this being open to full public scrutiny and debate. The aim would not be to prevent fiscal policy from respooding to short-term economic oceds, but to make such decisions transparent and subject to political accountability. In these respects, the reform would be the fiscal hand-maiden of

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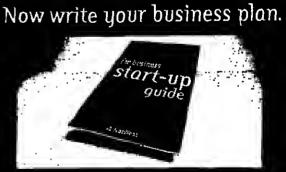
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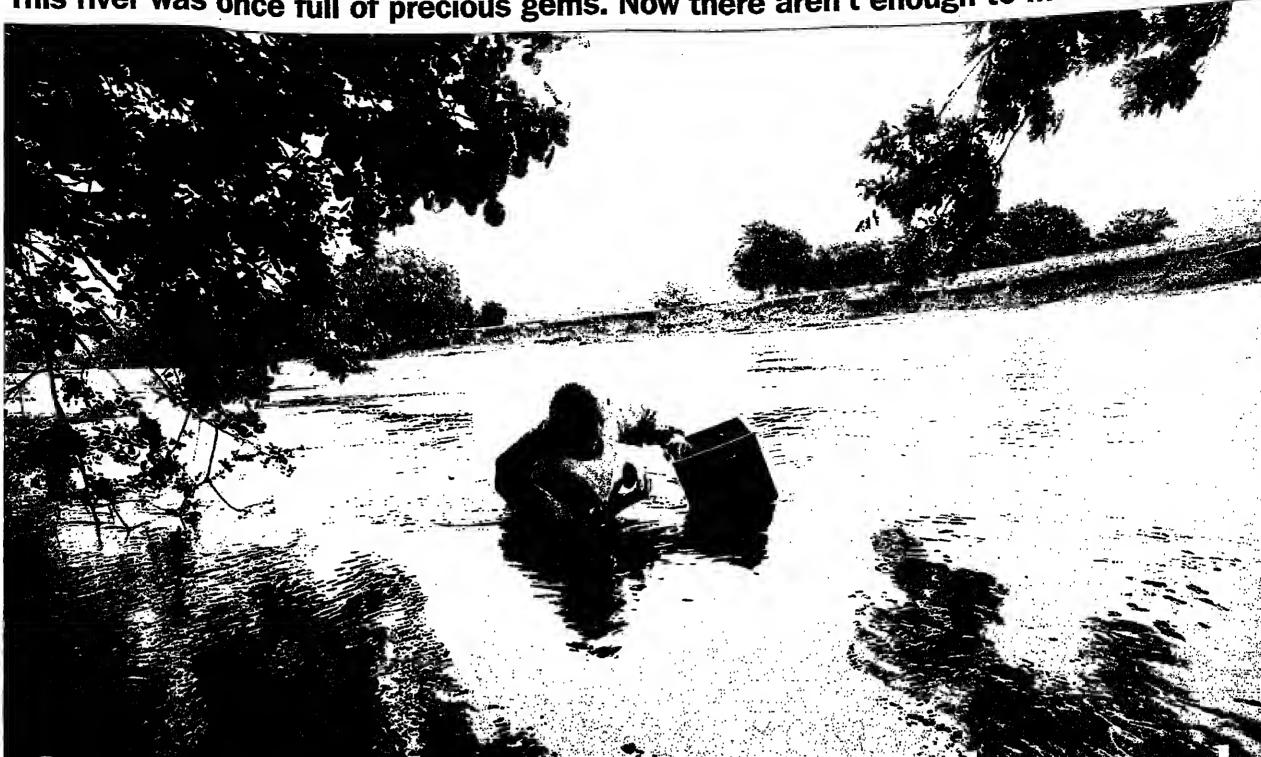
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This river was once full of precious gems. Now there aren't enough to make a necklace



## Quest for the last of the pearl musse

earl fishing is something most people would associate with the tropics, so it might come as a surprise to learn that the exploitation of the freshwater pearl mussel in Britain's chilly rivers has driven the species to the verge of extinction.

Graham Oliver, marine biologist and

head of Biodiversity and Systematic Biology at the Nadonal Museum of Wales, is calling for a blanket ban on pearl fishing. "You have to open thousands of

mussels to find a gem-quality pearl. While it is possible to do this without killing the molluse, cowboy fishermen don't even bother to try and return the mussel alive,

"In addition to fishing, juvenile mussels are being suffocated by algae which have increased hugely in quantity because they flourish on the nutrients in the water caused by fertiliser run-off and slurry." he Commercially viable gems have been

extracted from the pearl-yielding animal since Roman times. The pearls are produced when an irritant such as a grain of sand enters a molluse's shell. The creature secretes nacre - mother-of-pearl - to envelop it and prevent irritation.

The pearl fisherman ploughs through the river wearing all-over waders and bearing an ash pole fixed up like a 6ft clothes peg, and carrying a bucket with a glass bottom in his free hand.

He puts the bucket most of the way in the water and sticks the whole of his face in the open end. After that he walks



elusive freshwater pearl mussel Photographs: Rob Stratton

Hidden treasures: Graham Oliver, top, seeking the

around, chest deep, looking at the river bed, poking his stick around or coming up for air. The split end of the pole is clamped over the mussel until it is wedged and it

can be brought to the surface. With luck, for the fisherman anyway, the nacre inside has grown into a small ball. Then he has a classic pearl.

fishing is a cottage industry. However legitimate operators. together with ruthless opportunists hoping to eash in on the phenomenon, have all but destroyed the

species.
This, despite the
Government's decision to strengthen conservation of the pearl mussel earlier this year under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee recommended the changes to John Gummer, the former secretary of state for the environment, last February amid concern about the species.

On the other side of

the argument, however, a total ban would threaten the livelihoods of the few who have persisted with this ancient tradition. Graham Oliver acknowledges this, but believes prohibition is the only way in which the freshwater pearl mussel's future can be

"Implementing a complete ban is the only way lorward; any other method

would be impossible to police. We need to act quickly, research has shown undeniably that heavily fished waters do not recover." he said.

The River Wye, which runs through Mid Wales and Herefordshire, is a prime example of the effects of over-exploitation. In the 1930s it was known to have a thriving population of pearl

mussels, but a recent survey commissioned by English Nature recorded only 22. Adrian Fowles, invertebrate ecologist with the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), agrees that the prognosis is not

good.
"Following a number of studies, the feeling is that the British population is on a knife-edge. The species has a tascinating

life cycle - it lives to be a hundred ve old, dispersal of the young is achieve when juveniles attach themselves to gills of passing brown frout, which is effective means of establishing color upstream - I just hope that we are r already too late to save it."

Nerys Lloyd Piero

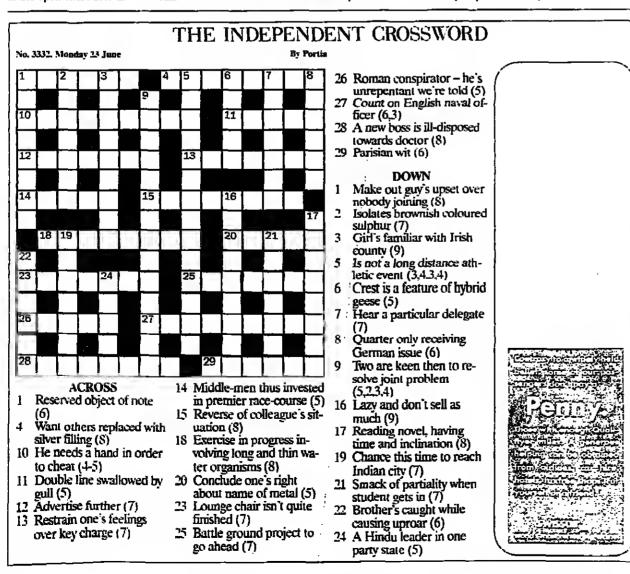
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